

THE  
Child's Story  
of the Gospel



OR THE  
New Testament  
made easy

FOR THE  
Little Ones.











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"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN"



# THE CHILD'S STORY OF THE GOSPEL

The New Testament Made Easy

EXPLAINING IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE IN A  
MANNER TO INTEREST CHILDREN, THE  
WONDERFUL TRUTHS AS TAUGHT BY  
CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES ✥ ✥ ✥ ✥ ✥

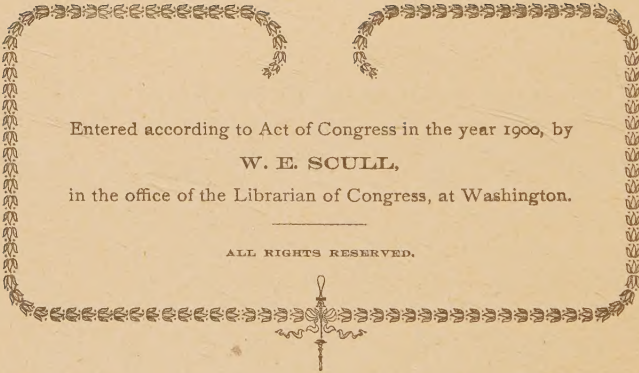
By

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Embellished with Lithographs and Half-tone Plates and  
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THE LAST SUPPER. (*After Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting.*)

## GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.\*

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### The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW I, II.



**T**HIS opening book of the New Testament introduces us into a new era and a new condition of things. When this book was written, nearly four hundred and fifty years had passed since Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, had completed his prophecies; the Jews had been governed by their high-priests, under the authority of foreign monarchs; had been oppressed, persecuted, and slain, and many of them compelled, under fear of death, to deny the God who had preserved and kept them; then they had been for nearly one hundred and fifty years under the government of prince-priests, who, at first, were wise, and patriotic, and good, but after three or four generations had become corrupt and vile; and they

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\* This, the opening book of the New Testament, the Genesis of the later revelation, corresponds in many points with the first book of the Old Testament. It was originally written in Hebrew, or

were now ruled by a very wicked king, Herod, who was himself a vassal of the Romans. In these four hundred and fifty years they had become fanatical in their observance of the traditions of the elders or rabbis, insisting on the minutest obedience to them, while they openly disobeyed the great principles of the moral law. The Pharisees, the leading sect among them, were self-righteous and hypocritical; they believed in a coming Messiah, but thought he would be a temporal king, and would deliver them from the Romans. They believed also that they alone would have a right to be the officers of the new kingdom which he would set up, and that the common people and all the Gentiles would be shut out from it.

We shall see, as we study this and the other gospels, how different was Christ's kingdom and mission from what they had supposed; and we shall also see what it really was. This first book or gospel is addressed to the Jews, and hence may be called a Jewish gospel; it presents the Messiah in his kingly character,\* and hence is the kingly gospel; but more than all else, it shows, sadly but truly, how the Messiah was rejected by his own people, the Jews, and hence has

---

rather Aramaic, a corrupt dialect of Hebrew, spoken at that time by Syrian Jews, and was afterwards translated into Greek. As the purpose of Genesis was to show how, to a particular family, race, and tribe, the great Redeemer was to be sent, and how, through all the earlier ages, the promise made in the Garden was to be amplified and extended, so in the Gospel according to Matthew we have the history of the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel, to his own chosen people; of their final and conclusive rejection of him as their King; and of the extension of his dominion, and the offers of salvation to all nations. It is the beginning of a new and more glorious era; and yet, more than any other book of the New Testament, except, perhaps, the Epistle to the Hebrews, it connects itself with the Old Testament in its application of prophecies, in its genealogies, its references to Jewish laws and customs, and in its constant use of Old Testament forms of expression concerning the Messiah. It contains more of the discourses or sermons of Christ, more of his miracles, and a larger number of his parables, than any of the other gospels; and it presents all in a systematic order, not chronological, but with the distinct purpose of showing their relations to one another, and to the general object of the Gospel. It has twenty-eight chapters, and is particularly full on those points on which the other gospels touch but lightly. It was probably written, primarily, for the Jewish disciples, perhaps within six or eight years after the ascension of Christ, and, at all events, several years earlier than any of the other gospels.

\* Read Matt. ii, 2; ii, 6, 13; iii, 2; iv, 11, 23; v, 22; vi, 13; vii, 28, 29; ix, 35; xiii, 33, 44-47; xiii, 19, 41; xvi, 19; xix, 28; xxi, 5, 9-16; xxiv, 14; xxv, 31, 34, 40; xxvi, 53; xxvii, 51-53; xxviii, 19. Read, also, "The Gospel according to Matthew, a Lecture," by Rev. Henry G. Weston, D. D., to whom the writer is indebted for some of these thoughts and references.



been fittingly called "the Gospel of the rejection." The word "Gospel" has been variously defined; it comes from the old Anglo-Saxon, and signifies good news, tidings, or history; it is properly the good news or history of Christ's taking our nature and becoming our Redeemer, and this is the way in which it is used in these four books. It is sometimes used in a larger sense, as meaning all of God's word or revelation to man. The Greek word which is translated *gospel* means



NATIVE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM AND LOT.

rather *the evangel*, or good message, implying that it is a message sent from God.

Matthew, whose surname was Levi, was a native of Galilee. Although a Jew, he had been appointed a publican or tax-gatherer by the Romans, who then ruled over Palestine. These publicans were much hated by the Jews. The taxes were of various kinds: a personal or poll-tax, licenses for fishing or for trade; export and import duties, etc. All these taxes Matthew collected at his office in Capernaum, when Jesus called him to leave them all and to follow him.

He obeyed the divine call, became one of the apostles, and recorded for the use of the Jewish disciples what he heard, and saw, and knew of the Messiah.

The first chapter of this gospel tells us from whom Jesus descended. It was the first step toward proving that he was the MESSIAH predicted by the prophets. Messiah means *anointed*. The prophets, priests, and kings of Israel were anointed with oil, to signify that God would so pour his holy blessings upon them; and it showed that they were set apart for their particular offices, to attend to those alone.



DAVID'S TOMB AT MOUNT ZION.

The Messiah, as Jesus is called, more especially bore that name, which is in other words *the anointed*, or *the anointed one*. CHRIST is a name which has also the same meaning. None were ever anointed with such an abundance of gifts and of grace as he was. He was a

prophet, a priest, and a king at the same time: *a prophet*, because he taught the way to heaven, besides foretelling many things which were to happen on earth; *a priest*, because he offered up a sacrifice, and such an one as made all sacrifices of an inferior kind of no use in future, so that they ceased when he offered up himself; and *a king*, because he was to reign over many hearts, and his subjects should yield him willing obedience in all times to come, and in all parts of the world.

Matthew traces the line of Jesus Christ from Abraham; for God promised to Abraham, in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, "In thee shall



all the families of the earth be blessed." It was, therefore, understood by Abraham that one should spring from him, who should indeed bless all the world,—not the Jews only, but the nations of the Gentiles. Matthew, then, in showing that Christ was the Messiah expected, here proves, in the first place, that he had one mark of the Messiah, for he sprang from Abraham.

But this was not enough: Abraham's family branched off in different lines—Isaac's in one branch, and Ishmael's in another; and so with the families that followed. But there was one particular line in which the promise was made, and among those of that line from Abraham was David; God had promised him, as we are told in the seventh chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, that He would set up his seed—or one of his race, after him, and "establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Matthew proves that Christ sprang from David, as well as from Abraham; and therefore proves that he was of a race from which the Messiah was to come.

It was necessary for Matthew to be thus particular in tracing the entire genealogy from Abraham to David, and from David to Christ, in order to demonstrate to the Jews, who were great sticklers for pedigree, that Christ was descended on his reputed father's side, and on the mother's also, from David and Abraham.\*

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\* Some of those people who are very anxious to find errors and contradictions in the Bible have pointed out the objections to this genealogy, that it did not agree with that in Luke iii, 23-38, and that in this several names were omitted; and they have urged that this was a proof that this Gospel was not inspired, nor true. These objections are very easily answered. In regard to the first, it may be said that the Jews, like all oriental nations, kept two distinct genealogies, both official, of their royal families—the first showing the line of succession; the second, the private or family genealogy, showing the collateral branches from which the succession was to be continued, if the main line ran out from want of heirs. This was just the case with David's line. Matthew gives the line of royal succession as it stood in the genealogy of the house of David; Luke gives the private or family record, showing that Joseph was descended from Nathan, the elder brother of Solomon, by the same mother (1 Chron. iii, 5), who was entitled to inherit the kingdom on the failure of the line of Solomon. That line did fail in the case of Jeconiah or Jechonias, who was written childless (Jeremiah xxii, 30), and who adopted as his heir Salathiel, the son of Neri, of the house of Nathan; who was the father of Zerubbabel, the Rhesa or ruling prince after the captivity. There is a mistake here in Luke iii, 27, as Rhesa is not a man's name, but Zerubbabel's official title. Another Jewish law explains the other difficulty—viz., that when the elder son failed to have a son, the son of his brother became his heir, as in the case of Matthan and of Heli, in the genealogy in Luke. Mary, the mother of our Lord, is, by general tradition, said

The next proof was that, as the prophet of Isaiah had foretold, Isa. vii, 14, he was born of *a virgin*, or of one that was unmarried; for



"AND THERE WERE SHEPHERDS ABIDING IN THE FIELDS."

tells us, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was

to be the daughter or granddaughter of Jacob, the elder brother of Heli. and to have married Joseph, the son of Heli.

though Joseph was the husband of Mary, he was only her betrothed husband—that is, he was only *engaged* to her, as we say;—yet that engagement, according to the custom of the Jews, could not be broken, and so he was, to all intents and purposes, by law and right the husband of Mary, though she was a virgin, or as yet not in reality married. Now, Jesus Christ was "conceived" or formed "by the Holy Ghost," or the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Ghost who formed the body of the blessed Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary; and St. Matthew



spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." "God with us" means again—God in flesh, God in our nature.

It was revealed to Joseph, in a dream, that this child was the Messiah; and after Jesus was born, Joseph went to live with Mary.

There was a third sign that Jesus was the Messiah—the anointed and expected Saviour, and this St. Matthew also takes care to tell us. He was "born in Bethlehem of Judea." There were two places called Bethlehem, and the place where Christ was born was called Bethlehem of Judea, to distinguish it from another Bethle-



"AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM."

hem in the tribe of Zebulun, which is mentioned in Joshua xix, 15.

The place where Christ should be born was also mentioned in prophecy: "for thus it is written by the prophets; and thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel."

Micah v, 2,

At the time when Christ was born "there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem," to inquire about him. The place from which these wise men came is supposed to have been Persia, because that lay east of Judea. Here they saw a wonderful star shining in the heavens, and it appeared to them to be exactly over the land of Judea. They, therefore, thought that something extraordinary had happened there; and it is supposed that they now remembered a prophecy of Balaam, who lived in the East,—which prophecy might have been handed down to them,—"There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Numbers xxiv, 17.

Herod the Great—as he was called—then reigned over the Jews; and when the wise men inquired after this new king, and the news came to the ears of Herod, he was "troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Herod was troubled for fear that he should lose his crown; and all Jerusalem was troubled lest there should be a civil war about who should have it, Christ or Herod. Now Christ came not to be the king of the Jews, as Herod was, but to be a spiritual king—to reign, not over territories, but over hearts; and to conquer, not the surrounding nations, but to overcome sin, death, and the powers of hell.

But Herod did not understand this, and he therefore very craftily set about, if possible, to destroy Jesus. And first he inquired of the chief priests and scribes where Christ was likely to be born; and they referred him to the prophecy of Micah, and told him—at Bethlehem of Judea. So Herod sent for the wise men, and informed them that he had found out the place after which they inquired, and he wished them to go and see the new king; and when they had found him they were to let him know, that he might worship him; but his real design was, not to worship Jesus, but to kill him.\*

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\* The exact date of the birth of Christ has occasioned much dispute. Dionysius Exiguus, a Syrian monk of great learning, in the sixth century published, as the result of his researches, the opinion that Christ was born 753 years after the founding of Rome—or, as you will sometimes see in books, A. U. C.—Anno Urbe Condita—753. As no one could then prove to the contrary, that year was after a time generally adopted by the nations of Europe as the year one of the Christian era. But within the last two hundred years, Biblical scholars have discovered, by comparing the death of Herod, the date of which is known absolutely, and the date when certain Roman gov-



Having received Herod's commands, the wise men took their leave, and set off for Bethlehem, which was only six miles from Jerusalem.

When the wise men departed, the star directed them to the house where "they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him." Then, according to the custom in that part of the world, when great persons were approached, and especially kings, they "opened their treasures, and presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh," the frankincense and myrrh both being valuable gums from Arabia and other parts of the East.

The wise men having seen Jesus, and left this suitable supply to his parents, who, though descended from King David, were but poor, departed for their own homes. Their nearest way was that which they took, and so they had no need to return to Jerusalem, as Herod desired them to do; but the grand reason why they did not was because God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

God then spoke to Joseph by an angel in a dream, and ordered him to leave Bethlehem directly with the infant Jesus and his mother, and go into Egypt, which was not far from Judea, and was out of Herod's dominions, and there to remain till he should receive a like command to return, for Herod would seek to kill the child. So Joseph got up directly and escaped by night into Egypt, where he, Mary, and the infant, remained till the death of Herod.

When Herod found that the wise men did not return, he was in a great rage; and supposing that Jesus was at Bethlehem, he was resolved yet to carry his wicked design against him into effect. He could not, indeed, learn which was the infant he wanted, but to make sure of his mark he ordered some of his officers to go to Bethlehem,



BRANCH OF THE SHRUB YIELDING  
THE GUM CALLED MYRRH.

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errors ruled in Judea, that the date of Dionysius was several years too late. It is now generally believed that Christ was born in 749 A. U. C., or four years before our era, though Lewin and some others say it was six years.

and kill all the children that were two years old and under, thinking that by killing the children of that age he should be sure to kill the new king. The wicked king Herod was so cruel that history tells us he even slew three of his own sons; no wonder he had a heart so hard as to kill the little infants in Bethlehem.

When Herod was dead, Joseph was again spoken to by an angel in



EASTERN TRAVELERS.

a dream; and, being ordered to return, he left Egypt and went to live at Nazareth:

### Account of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW III.

Another testimony to Jesus being the Messiah is stated by St. Matthew. It is that the Messiah was to have a forerunner; or, as great men used to have footmen or heralds going before them to clear



the way for them, so Jesus was to be announced to the world by a prophet. And "in those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea." This was "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord," which the prophet Isaiah foretold in the fortieth chapter of his prophecy.

John the Baptist—the name by which he is distinguished from John the Evangelist—was a priest of the order of Aaron, though we do not find that he ever ministered in the temple; but we shall have occasion to notice more about him as we proceed through the four Gospels.

The subject on which John the Baptist preached was repentance; the theme of his discourses was—"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

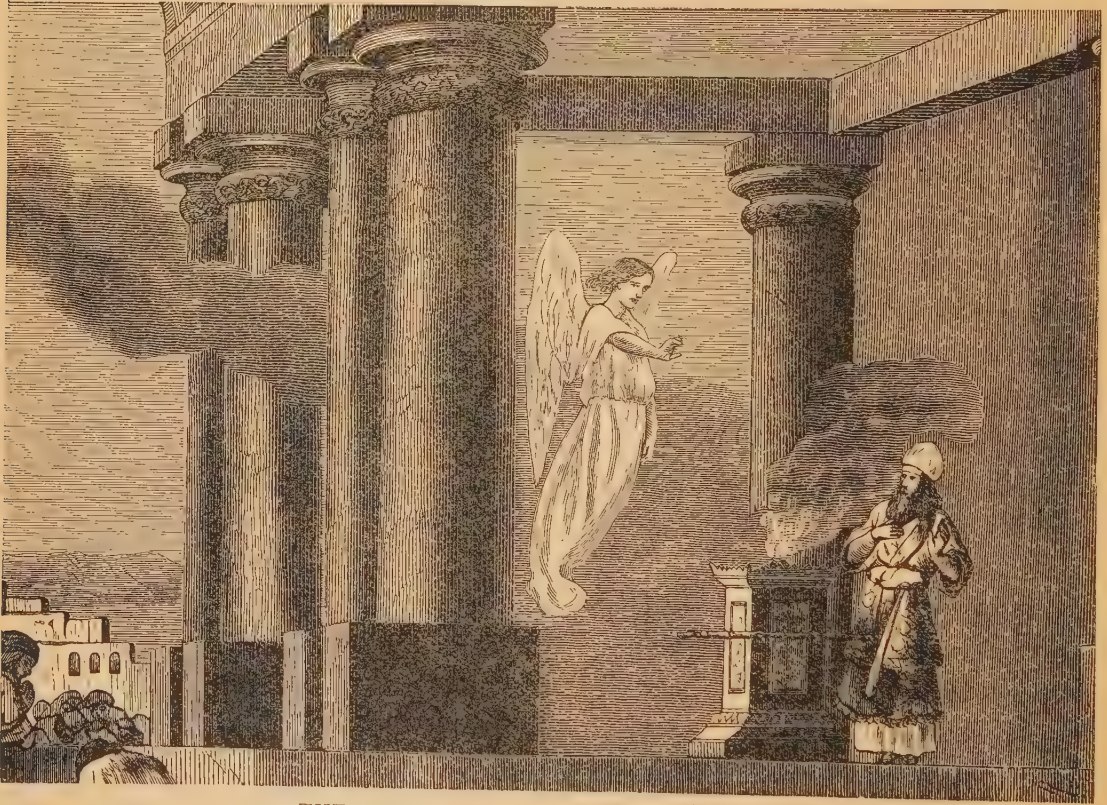
The dress of John the Baptist appears to have been singular enough; but it was the dress in which the prophets usually appeared—perhaps a camel's skin with the hair on it, or a garment of hair, which was very rough; for in such plain robes the prophets used to dress. John's meat was also as singular as his dress, for he lived chiefly on "locusts and wild honey."

It appears that John, by his preaching, attracted great crowds. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan"; not that every person in Jerusalem and Judea, and round about them, heard him at the same time, nor that every person heard him at all, but Matthew means that the crowds were great from all parts of Jerusalem and Judea, and they were of all sorts, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, Pharisees and publicans. To these he spoke in bold language, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come! And he told them not to boast about Abraham being their father—that is, not to boast that they were Jews descended from Abraham; but to bring forth good fruit, that is, good works, as a good tree brings forth good fruit; and so, if they wished to be thought the children of pious Abraham, they must be pious like Abraham.

Our Lord Jesus from his childhood till now, when he was almost thirty years of age, had lain hid in Galilee.

"It is supposed that John the Baptist began to preach and baptize

about six months before Christ appeared." Prior to his entering on his ministry, Christ came to John to be baptized of him; and John baptized him, though he felt reluctant to do it, and thought it too great an honor when Christ went to him for that purpose. After this was done, John saw the heavens opened, as it were; the sky looked all clear, and bright, and glorious, to his eyes, and the sweet influences of



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO ZACHARIAS.

divine grace were coming gently and yet strikingly upon Jesus, "like a dove,"—that is, in some form of light resembling the appearance of a dove, and mild as a dove, or as a dove descends, and hovers, and lights.

John also heard a voice speaking from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Thus was Jesus declared to be the Son of God.

In this chapter you read of "the Pharisees and Sadducees;" their



names will often occur in these Gospels. We will next tell you who they were.

The "Pharisees" were a sect or set of men among the Jews, who professed to observe the law of God more than any others; they made a great show of their religion outwardly, and took care that everybody should take notice of them when they prayed, or did any religious service. They contrived, by these means, to gain the favor of the multitude, and their influence was at last so great that they filled many of the best offices. They taught that men could merit heaven, without a Saviour.

The "Sadducees" were a sort of infidels. They believed that the soul died when the body was dead, and denied that the body would rise again. As they believed there was neither reward nor punishment in another world, they did not leave sinners to humble themselves before God, or to receive their deserts from him, but punished offenders against the law in the severest manner. While the Pharisees believed in traditions, these people believed only in the written law of Moses.

## The Temptation of Jesus Christ.

### MATTHEW IV.

Jesus, after his baptism, withdrew into the wilderness, for a period of fasting and prayer, before entering upon his work as a divine teacher. It is generally believed that the place where he went was what is now known as Mount Quarantania, northwest of Jericho, a very wild and forbidding region, inhabited only by wild beasts. Here, at the end of his forty days of fasting, Satan, who was not quite certain that he was really God manifest in the flesh, assailed him with his sharpest temptations. It is probable that two at least, and perhaps all the three of these temptations were visions, in which the tempter assumed a bodily form; but in the weakened condition of the body of Jesus, after this long fast, these visions might be the most trying of temptations. The first was an appeal to his creative power to furnish himself with food, for he was exceedingly hungry. The tempter suggested: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." It

was in a desert region not far from this that God had provided by a miracle that bread from heaven—the manna—which had fed Israel; and if he was really the son of God, why should he not repeat the miracle in another form? Jesus could have turned the stones into bread if he would, for he afterwards turned water into wine; but he was not willing to lower his divine dignity at the suggestion of the tempter, and he said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” By this he meant that God’s word told us to rely upon him to find us bread



THE INFANT JOHN.

when we wanted it, and that those who trusted in him need not require the power of working miracles to produce bread from stones, but only let them trust in God, and he would provide for them. The passage which our Lord quoted you will find in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and in the third verse.

Satan then carried Jesus in vision to the pinnacle, or the top of the temple in Jerusalem, which was not far off. While he was here, standing over the holy city of Jerusalem, Satan proposed to him to cast himself down; and then further suggested

that it was written in the word of God, “He shall give his angels charge over thee,” so that he could try by this whether what God’s word said was true. Jesus directly replied, with an answer from Scripture, “It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” To tempt is to try, or put to the test; and we are never to run into danger to see if God can bring us out of it. The above words are quoted from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the sixteenth verse.

Christ was still assailed by Satan, who carried him in vision to a very high mountain, which commanded a view of the surrounding countries, and, while viewing their extent, he showed him “all the kingdoms of the world,” and presented to his mind their vast dominion, if he would only serve him. Perhaps his suggestion was



something like this, that: with his mighty power he should have all the idolatrous world immediately for his subjects if he would conform to their customs, and justify their rites, and give honor to their false gods. Here Jesus both baffled and drove the tempter away, for he said: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Here,



JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACHING REPENTANCE.

finally, our Lord referred to the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the thirteenth verse.

Thus this vile enemy was driven away, and offered no more suggestions, for he saw that he could make no impression upon the mind of Christ, as he too often does upon our minds, when we think and do what is evil.

After this Jesus was comforted and fed by angels.

Jesus commenced preaching soon after this, and a few months later

John was cast into prison. The early labors of the Saviour were in Capernaum and its vicinity, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, a few miles from Nazareth; and thus a prophecy was accomplished about his appearing there to give the light of knowledge to the darkened understandings of men.

Now it was that Jesus began to choose some disciples who should attend him on his journeys, learn his doctrines, and see the wonderful things he would do, so that they might bear witness about them after he had left the world.

Walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw Peter and his brother Andrew fishing; and so—for the reason just named—he bade these fishermen follow him, for he would make them “fishers of men,” meaning that they should no more catch fish, but he would employ them to bring sinners to be saved by him. Soon after, he saw James and John, who were fishermen also, and were in a ship, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called to them in the same way, and they also followed him.

Jesus now proceeded in preaching; and, in addition to this, he worked miracles, or did many things beyond the reach of natural means to do; and so St. Matthew gives us yet another evidence that he was the Messiah—the Anointed Saviour.

### Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

MATTHEW V, VI, VII.

We now come to what is called our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. It contains the beatitudes, or declarations of blessings made by Jesus. His first words are: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” By these he means all humble souls who feel their need of a Saviour, as a truly poor man feels his need of charity. While many a proud rich man, and many a proud poor man too, shall be shut out of heaven, such a humble poor soul shall have a rich portion there.

Then he proceeds: “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted;” that is, they that are sorry for their sins, and grieve that





**CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN**

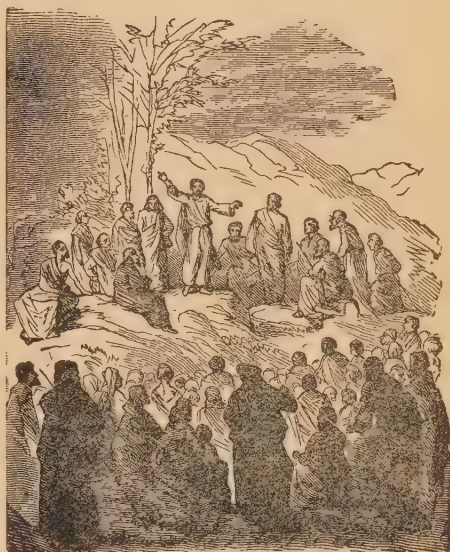
"Suffer little children to come unto me."—Luke xviii. 15



"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM"



they have offended against a good God, shall be pardoned for Jesus Christ's sake. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"; angry persons, full of resentment at every affront, can never enjoy any comfort of life; but meek spirits, having the temper of Christ, really inherit all the good that is around them, and enjoy it for themselves. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"; those who find themselves guilty before God, and with a desire strong as a hungry man has for meat, or a thirsty man for drink, look for acceptance with God through a better righteousness, or better merits than their own, shall be satisfied with the righteousness of the Saviour. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"; those who show mercy and kindness toward the bodies and souls of their fellow-creatures, for Jesus Christ's sake, shall receive mercy from him. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"; and none else shall see him in glory, but those whose hearts or dispositions are made clean and new by the Divine Spirit. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." Those who do all they can to make men live quietly and harmlessly, like real Christians, and to stop strife whenever they see it, God will bless, and they shall be owned as his children, who so strikingly bear one of the marks of his image; so you see that those who love to quarrel have no right to look for the Saviour's blessing. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This means that those who are ill-treated by wicked people, because they are religious, shall be rewarded at last with the blessings of glory, which their persecutors, except they repent, can never enjoy. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of



SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

evil against you falsely for my sake." Those who are called ill-natured names, or names intended to reproach them, because they serve God in sincerity, shall be blessed too; "Rejoice and be exceeding glad," if this is the case, "for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets"; and if they did so to the holy prophets, you must expect that they will not spare you.

Our Divine Teacher then goes on to show what he expects from those who are his disciples.

He removes every ground of mistake about his doctrine, and shows the people that his disciples must reverence the holy law of God, and the truths taught by the prophets, and have a better righteousness or holiness than the Scribes and Pharisees, who were men that made only an outside show of religion, while, in their hearts, they did not love the law of God.

To help you to understand better our Lord's discourse, I must just notice these two classes.

The one class of persons is called "Scribes." They wrote copies of the Scriptures long before printing was known in the world, and whatever they heard of traditions, or things in the

Jewish history which God's word did not record; they also read and explained the Scriptures to the people, giving their own fancied meaning to them, while the people listened to their comments with great reverence. Many of these Scribes were Pharisees, and so our Lord often coupled them together.

The other class of persons is called publicans. A publican we understand to be a person who keeps an inn; but these publicans were not inn-keepers, but tax-gatherers employed by the Romans to collect taxes of the Jews, who were then subject to Rome. They were not liked by the Jews, and, in gathering the taxes, very often cheated the



READERS OF THE JEWISH LAW.



people, dealt hardly with them, and took more from them than they ought, for the purpose of putting the money into their own pockets.

In continuing his sermon, our Lord warns against making a show of our charity, and also against making a show of prayer.

And here our Lord tells us what kind of petitions are to be offered, in what we call "The Lord's Prayer," which, as you probably know, we wish you well to understand. Here you address God as your Father; for, as a father, he provides for you; you look to him in heaven, the holy dwelling of his glory; you express a desire that his name may be treated with reverence; you wish that he may reign over your heart, and over the hearts of others everywhere, and that his holy law may be done among all mankind; you acknowledge that you live by his bounty, who gives you daily bread; you confess your sins, which are debts to God, because they have left you short in paying God the duties you owe to him, and you ask him graciously to pardon them, as you pardon those who offend you—which we hope you do; you ask God to preserve you from doing sinful things, which is meant by "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," or from the evil one, who is Satan; and you express your full belief that God can do all that you ask, and your desire to give him honor and praise, by ending the prayer with saying, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." Amen means, *so be it*.



JEWISH SCRIBES IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

Other warnings given by our Lord are against being covetous. Jesus Christ tells such persons that, if their treasures consist in fine garments, like those laid up by rich people in the East, the moth will by-and-by eat them up; or, if in precious metals, they will at last canker; or, in other treasures, they may be robbed of them; and it is,

therefore, much wiser to look for a lasting portion of better treasure—the happiness of heaven; the love and favor of God forever is far better than all the riches that ever were got together in this world.

He then goes on to warn against being insincere in religion, against thinking uncharitably of others, against doing harm to anybody, against being deceived by false prophets,—that is, false preachers or teachers,—and also against deceiving ourselves.

Lastly, our dear Saviour concludes his sermon by a pretty and striking comparison, taken from fishermen in the East, who, to be near the sea at fishing time, build their huts on the sands, when the storms come and, in a moment, sweep them all away. So, he tells us, will the hopes of all those perish who are contented with hearing what he taught, but never doing it; but those who mind his sayings and do them shall be like a wise man, who built his house on a rock, which floods, rain, and wind could never sweep away. The house of the wise man fell not, for it was founded upon a rock; the house of the foolish man fell, and great was the fall of it, for it was built upon the sand. Christ himself is as a rock, on which thousands have safely rested their hopes for eternity; but this world, with all its hopes of pleasure, is but as sand; and those who build upon it for happiness must at last lose everything, and be ruined forever.

Thus Christ ended his divine sermon, and the people were astonished at hearing him—all he said was so wise, pure, and good; all he said was so different from what the Scribes and Pharisees had taught. And he still preaches to us in this sermon: he still preaches to us in his holy word. May we learn of him, for he is still, by his Holy Spirit, ready to teach us—he is “meek and lowly of heart, and we shall find rest for our souls.”

### Miraculous Cures performed by Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW VIII, IX.

When Jesus came down from the Mount, the people did not like to leave him, they were so delighted with what he had said. Crowds followed him wherever he went.



Matthew now tells us about a wonderful cure which Jesus performed. A poor creature afflicted with leprosy earnestly cried to him for help. If we had seen him our hearts would have felt the greatest pity for him, for the leprosy was a most miserable disease. We think we see him, with his white skin covered all over with scurf, which, had it been taken off, would have shown a body full of raw wounds. Perhaps he could hardly drag along his swollen limbs, with deformed joints, the effect of his horrible disease; and every one stood away from him, lest he should be infected by him. But Jesus, whose

“Heart is made of tenderness,”

was ready at once to help him; and if others pitied him, and could not help, Christ both pitied and helped him, too. He touched him, and he was cured; his word was enough to remove the disorder—“I will; be thou clean.”

Matthew here tells us of another wonderful cure which he did. A Centurion, or officer in the Roman army, met him in a place called Capernaum, where he was dwelling; and, doubtless, having heard of his fame and readiness to do good, he humbly asked him to cure his servant. “Lord,” said the officer, “my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” It is not quite certain that Matthew meant by the palsy, in this chapter, the disease which we call by that name; for the names of diseases, and the diseases themselves change from age to age; but the disease was, at all events, very distressing and generally considered incurable; but Christ could cure it as well as he did the leprosy; so he said, “I will come and heal him.” The officer thought it was too great an honor for Christ to visit him, and again humbly asked him only to command the disease to go, and it would obey him, as readily as his soldiers did when he gave them the word of command. This was great faith in his power, to believe that he could cure the man, though the man was not there. But he knew that Christ could see the man, though the man could not see him; and, as Christ delights in those who fully trust in him, he praised the man’s faith to his disciples, to teach them to trust him with the same confidence; and he told the Centurion to go home, and he would find his

servant well; and so he was, for he "was healed in the self-same hour."

The next account of Christ's curing the sick informs us that the mother of Peter's wife was "sick of a fever"—a disorder that is often very severe and killing, and if cured it is not to be cured in a moment. But Jesus only touched her hand, and the fever left her.

At that time Satan and his wicked spirits tormented the bodies of some persons in a surprising way, as though they would prevent Christ from gaining honor by curing these victims. But these were nothing before him, for "he cast out the devils with his word."

Perhaps you have seen the sea, and how rough its waves are. Did you ever see it in a storm? It foams most furiously, and its waves swell like high mountains. It dashes against the rocks as if it would even crush them to pieces. When this is the case the winds blow with a force that scarcely anything can resist. In such a storm the disciples were when Christ was with them in a ship, crossing the sea of Tiberias into the country of Gadara. While they were all in alarm, and "the ship was covered with waves," he was in a sweet sleep. The disciples, whose faith in his



HEALING THE BLIND.

divine power was now fully strengthened, having seen what wonderful things he did, immediately awoke him, and cried, "Lord, save us: we perish!" His tender heart felt pity for their distress, and he instantly commanded the winds and the waves to be still, "and there was a great calm." Well might they wonder and say, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"

The next instance of our Lord's power is the cure of two men possessed of devils. These men lived in caves of the rocks, where the



Jewish people used to make their tombs to bury their dead, and they were so "exceeding fierce" that "no man might pass by that way." The wicked spirits that were in these unhappy bodies were in a still greater rage when they saw Christ approaching them, and they said, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" From which question it is believed that wicked spirits will be more tormented after the day of judgment than they ever yet have been. Since these devils found that Christ would not let them keep possession of the bodies of these poor men whom they tormented, they asked to go into a herd of swine that they saw near them—for they would rather torment these poor animals than be prevented from doing any harm at all. Now, as these swine belonged to Jews, and were kept contrary to God's law, who would not allow them to partake of them, being reckoned among the unclean beasts, Jesus, to punish their owners, suffered the devils to go into the swine, which they so tormented that they "ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."



WINE SKINS.

The covetous Jews were very angry that they had lost their swine, though two of their people had been saved from cruel torments by the loss, and having besought Jesus to leave them, he went home again to Capernaum.

Jesus having returned to Capernaum, another man, "sick of the palsy," was brought to him on his bed, or mattress, which in the Eastern countries is very light and thin. Our Lord, seeing that the man himself, and his friends, believed in his willingness and power to cure him, instantly gave him relief, both in soul and body,—he pardoned his sins, and he sent him home, carrying the bed on which he was brought. Some of the wicked Scribes who were present, when they

heard Christ tell the man that his sins were forgiven him, charged him with blasphemy, because none but God could forgive sins, and they knew not that he was "God *manifest*," or *seen*, "in the flesh." But they must have been ashamed of themselves, and put to silence when our Lord afterwards cured the man; for as none but God could forgive sins, so none but God could say with effect to one sick of the palsy, "Arise and walk."

At this time Matthew was called to be one of Christ's disciples; Luke calls him Levi, for the Jews often had two names. He was sitting taking taxes at "the receipt of custom," or a custom-house, where duties on goods are paid to the king, when Jesus said to him, "'Follow me.' And he arose and followed him." So, when his grace touches the heart, sinners now leave all their wicked connections, and are ready to give up all their worldly gains, if they stand in their way, and follow the Lord Jesus Christ by openly professing him, and declaring in their lives whose they are and whom they serve.



LEATHER BOTTLES.

We next find Jesus at a feast given by Matthew to his friends, as appears from the fifth chapter of Luke. Perhaps he wished to do them good on this occasion, and wanted them to hear what his Lord would say. His companions were publicans, or tax-gatherers, a set of men greatly despised because they pressed people so hard to get all the money they could from them. The proud Pharisees, who thought themselves the best of men, were astonished that Christ, who taught the people to be holy, should sit down with such company. But our Lord did not go there to countenance any wickedness, but with the design to teach them the way to be saved.

The seventeenth verse of this chapter refers to a custom not known in America, and for that reason some have not understood it. Our Lord says, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." He said this to signify that his disciples, being men taken from active business, and not accustomed to fast, as were the disciples of John,



were not fit to bear the severity of it any more than an old bottle could bear new wine; and, in a verse preceding, than an old rotten garment would bear mending with a strong, new piece. Now we can see why an old garment must not be mended with a strong, new piece of cloth, because the new piece would tear away the rotten part by its strength and weight. But how can new wine hurt old bottles? An old American bottle is as good as a new one, and perhaps, indeed, better, because it is seasoned,—has been tried and found good. But the bottles used in the East were made of the skins of goats or kids, which were taken off whole and dressed; all the legs but one, and the neck, being tied up, were used until the leather became tender and easily rent by strong pressure.

A certain ruler of the synagogue, where the Jews worshiped, had a daughter lying dead; and, having heard of the wonderful things which Jesus did, he believed that he was able to restore his daughter, even from death itself, and so went and worshiped him, and asked him for his almighty aid. Jesus arose from Matthew's table where he was then sitting, and, following the ruler, went with him to his house.

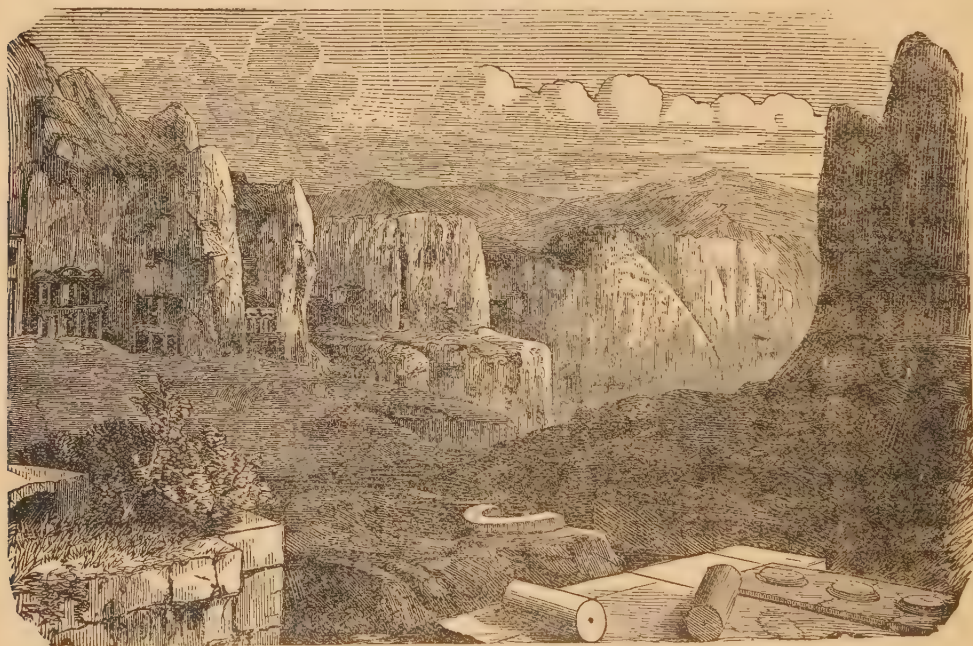
On his way to the ruler's house a poor woman who had had "an issue of blood twelve years," and which she could get no one to cure, came behind him, and, being full of faith in his power to cure her, she thought she would touch the hem of his garment,—the fringe which our Lord wore as a Jew,—and even that garment, hanging about his sacred person, might be the channel of conveying the healing virtue which he possessed to her poor diseased body. Jesus knew all about what she was doing, and why she did it, and he graciously turned round to her and said: "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." *He*, indeed, had made her whole, but by her *believing* in his power to heal her she had received the cure.

Jesus then went to the ruler's house, and when he came there he "saw the minstrels and the people making a noise." This was a proof that his daughter was really dead, for the minstrels were pipers who



POURING WINE OUT OF A BOTTLE.

played mournful tunes, and the noise was such as was made by mourning women, who were always employed among the Jews to groan and cry over deceased persons. So he stopped their playing and mourning, and told them that the little maiden was not dead, but only slept; for she was not dead to him, since he could at once restore her; but, as they had seen that she was dead, they laughed at him for saying the contrary. However, he soon gave proof that death to him was no more than a sleep; and though no merely human being could awake



VALLEY OF SALT, BETWEEN CANAAN AND EDM.

the dead, he could. And, going in, he took her by the hand, and she rose up: and the fame of this cure went abroad everywhere.

When he left the ruler's house two blind men followed him, and they cried: "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." These men believed that Jesus was the true Messiah, or anointed Saviour,—and, as he was to be of the family of David, they addressed Christ, "Thou Son of David." He let them follow him into the house, and then he asked if they really believed he could cure them. And they said, "Yea, Lord;" and, he having merely touched their eyes, they received sight.



The blind men had hardly left the house when the people brought Jesus "a dumb man possessed with a devil." It is thought that the wicked spirit had taken away his power of speech. "And when the devil was cast out the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, 'It was never so seen in Israel.'" Moses, Elijah, and Elisha were great prophets, and did wonderful things,—but so many such things, and done in so wonderful a way, were never before known in Israel. And these same multitudes were doubtless greatly influenced to regard Christ as being sent from God, and as being all he claimed for himself; but were so rigidly held by the power of the synagogue, and the Jewish priesthood, that they hesitated, and even feared, to harbor such conviction—much more, to give utterance to it, in a way that would be likely to reach the ears of those in authority. Only the careful Bible student can properly estimate the force of this.

### Christ's Twelve Disciples.

#### MATTHEW X.

We have here a list of the twelve apostles, which, for the sake of memory, we put down in three columns, and divide into three fours:

- |                           |                 |                                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Simon, called Peter.   | 5. Philip.      | 9. James, son of Alphaeus.      |
| 2. Andrew, his brother.   | 6. Bartholomew. | 10. Lebbeus, surnamed Thaddeus. |
| 3. James, son of Zebedee. | 7. Thomas.      | 11. Simon, the Canaanite.       |
| 4. John, his brother.     | 8. Matthew.     | 12. Judas Iscariot.             |

Of these, the first two, Simon Peter and Andrew, were brothers. The next two, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, were also brothers.

The last among the next four was Matthew, the writer of this gospel; and the last of the last four was Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed his Divine Master.

In the first verse these are called *disciples*, which means persons who *learn of a teacher*; for Christ was their teacher, and they learned from him. In the second verse they are called *apostles*, which means persons who *are sent*. These twelve were chosen as Christ's disciples, that they might be always with him, and see the wonderful things which he did, and hear the divine doctrines which he taught; and

afterwards they went forth as apostles to tell the world what they had heard and seen, and so to deliver his *message* as servants whom he had *sent*. \*

## Christ's Estimate of John the Baptist.

MATTHEW XI.

John the Baptist was at this time cast into prison. The cause of his imprisonment is given in the fourteenth chapter. The wonderful things which Jesus did were, however, told him in that place, and as he desired that his disciples should become acquainted with Christ, he

sent them to hear from his own lips what proofs he could give that he was the long-hoped-for Messiah. Jesus both told and showed them what wonderful things he performed on the blind, the lame, the lepers, the deaf, the dead; and how he preached the glad tidings of heavenly mercy to the poor. These were proofs enough.



PRISON IN WHICH JOHN WAS BEHEADED.

Then, as soon as John's disciples were gone, he took occasion to show the character of this good man, on whose faithful ministry many of the people had attended. "What," said he, "went ye out into the wilderness to see?" when you went to hear John the Baptist. "A reed shaken with the wind?" They understood the meaning of his question, which was that John the Baptist was not a timid, wavering preacher, weak and shaking like a reed—but they had had the benefit of the boldest warnings from his lips.

"But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses." If they

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\* For full information regarding the Apostles individually refer to the second department of this book, entitled "The Apostles of Jesus."



had gone to see such an one when they went to see John the Baptist, they had found themselves mistaken, for he was quite a plain man, who was not concerned to make a show of himself in the world, but to prepare the hearts of the people to receive Christ.

Yet again he asked, "But what went ye out for to see? a prophet?" If this had been their expectation, they had been even more highly privileged than those who had heard the prophets, for, in hearing John the Baptist, they had heard more than a prophet, a person more excellent than a prophet,—his "messenger,"—one whom God had sent to be the forerunner of his own Son when he came into the world to preach glad tidings to the lost.

They had indeed heard the greatest man that ever was born; for he was prophesied of by the prophets, and pointed to the very object himself before the people which the prophets had never seen, but were only honored to foretell.

Thus you see that true greatness does not consist of riches, or show, or talents, but it consists in our being servants of Christ; and he who is the most faithful of his servants, and is honored with divine intercourse with him, is raised to the most exalted rank. Indeed, though John the Baptist was so great a man, Jesus said even of him, "Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The little infant in heaven is greater than John was, for he was then exposed to the faults which belong to the best of men, while the infant that is in heaven is free from all sin, and forever near and like his glorious Creator.

### **The Pharisees' Enmity Against Christ.**

#### MATTHEW XII.

One Sabbath day Jesus was going through a corn-field on his way to the synagogue, and his disciples who were with him, being hungry, plucked some ears of corn and ate them. Now, the Pharisees, though they were wicked in their hearts, were very particular about some outward things, wishing people to think them the most pious men in the world. So they found fault with Jesus for letting his disciples

pluck the corn on the Sabbath, which they considered as a sort of work, forbidden by the fourth commandment, which says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy—in it thou shalt not do any work." (See the twentieth chapter of Exodus.) Jesus, who was always full of wisdom, gave them a prompt reply, to which they could not make any answer, for he reminded them how David ate the shew-bread when he was hungry, and that bread God had commanded to be given



DANCING IN THE EAST.

only to the priests, yet the priest gave it to David and his men. He also told them to recollect that the priests did work on the Sabbath day, and that within the temple too, for they could not kill and sacrifice the beasts without doing work, and yet they were not doing wrong. This silenced them, and he went to the synagogue.

When he arrived at the synagogue they resolved on renewing their attack upon him; and as there was a man there with a withered hand, they asked him if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day. This they did "that

they might accuse him," for they even taught that no medicine was to be given on the Sabbath. Our Lord asked them whether it was not lawful to save a sheep on the Sabbath day, when it had fallen into a pit; and, if a sheep, why not a man, who was of so much more value than a beast? "Wherefore," said he, "it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." We may not only worship God on that day, but we may relieve the poor, visit the sick, and do other works of kindness and charity. This Christ has taught us by healing the sick,



for he said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."

As breaking of the Sabbath was a crime punished by death (see the thirty-fifth chapter of Exodus), the Pharisees, instead of being thankful for the good done to the man, sought to destroy Christ for curing him, declaring that he had broken the Sabbath. Oh, how far will men go in wickedness when their hearts are hardened! How blind the Pharisees must have been not to have seen that none could have done such a cure but God, or by his power! Jesus, however, went away from them, and multitudes followed him, who, hearing what he had done, took their sick with them, "and he healed them all." That was, indeed, a happy Sabbath to all these poor creatures; they would remember it as long as they lived. However, "he charged them that they should not make him known." He did this, perhaps, for two reasons: the one to prevent the Pharisees' having any more proofs of who he was, since they had already refused to believe in him from what they had seen; and the other to teach us that when we do good we ought not to publish it abroad in every place like the Pharisees, who did all their works "to be seen of men."



ANCIENT HARVESTERS.

Among those our Lord healed was "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb." This cure, more than all the rest, quite astonished the people, and they said that Christ was certainly "the Son of David," meaning the Messiah, for he was to spring from David, and so Christ was his son. The Pharisees heard of this cure, but they said Christ did it by the aid of the false god Beelzebub, whom they styled "the prince of devils." Now, the devil does much evil, but never any good, and it was the height of malice to accuse Christ of doing that by the power of the devil which every one whose heart was not obstinately set against him, must have seen was done by the power of God. This was so wicked that our Lord passes sentence against these

hardened men, and since they sinned against the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of God—in saying that the devil did what none but the Almighty could do, he declared that such could have no pardon.

Some Scribes and Pharisees having now surrounded him, asked him to give them some other signs, besides those which he had given, before they would believe in him. Christ would not gratify their vain curiosity, but he tells them that they shall have one sign more, and that “as Jonas (or Jonah) was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” By this he meant his resurrection from the dead—the greatest proof that he was the Messiah. Then, as he was speaking of Jonah, he told them that they, the Pharisees, were so obstinate and wicked that even the men of Nineveh would rise up against them as witnesses in the day of judgment, and condemn them, for they had repented at the preaching of Jonah, while they, the Pharisees, remained impenitent, though a greater than Jonas was there. Jonah is the Hebrew name of that prophet, but Jonas the name he bore among the Greeks.

**Parables.—The Sower: The Tares: The Mustard-seed: The Leaven: The Hidden Treasure: The Pearl: The Net.**

#### MATTHEW XIII.

We now come to our Lord’s parables; and they are very interesting indeed, as well as instructive. But do you know what a parable means? It is a sort of fable, and, by feigned stories, teaches us true things. Parable sometimes has other meanings in Scripture, but this is the meaning of our Lord’s parables. You have perhaps been amused with Æsop’s or Gay’s fables, and they teach us many good lessons about how we should conduct ourselves in going through the world; but our Lord’s parables teach us how we may find a better world. The finest fables are comparatively nonsense by the side of Christ’s parables. They are so simple, so natural, so tender, so beautiful—and yet some of them are so grand.

The first parable in this chapter is that called “the *Sower*.”





# THE LAST SUPPER

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks."—*Mat.* xxvi, 27.



#### THE CRUCIFIXION

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."—John xix, 25.



Our Lord explains this parable. The *Sower* was himself, and it may also mean every *minister of his gospel*; the *seed* which he sows when he preaches is the best of seed—*God's word*. The *ground* on which he sows is the *heart*. Now, when he sows, sometimes "the wicked one" comes and takes away the seed; and when we do not pay attention, we let the devil get into our minds, and, like the little birds with the seed, he carries away from us all the good we might get. At other times we hear the word with great pleasure; but if any wicked persons find fault with us that we are too religious, then we are in danger of minding what they say, and of thinking too lightly of the joy we felt when we heard the gracious truths of the blessed gospel; and so we are like the stony-ground hearers, for the seed withers in our hearts, instead of taking root. At other times we let bad, foolish, and vain thoughts enter into our minds while we are hearing, and these become so numerous that there is not room for anything better to enter. Then it is that the word in our hearts resembles the seed sown among thorns. But if we hear the word, if we understand it, and if we bring forth fruit, and are holy in our thoughts and lives, then the good seed takes root, and we show that we have not received it in vain. The next parable is "The Wheat and Tares." You may read it from the twenty-fourth to thirtieth verses.

You will often find our Lord using the expression, "the kingdom of heaven." But he does not mean by it the state of blessedness to which all that are made holy go when they die. That, too, is the kingdom of heaven, which we may call the kingdom of heaven *above*; but there is a kingdom of heaven *below*. All that hear the gospel are within the boundaries of this kingdom. Christ, in his gospel, asks them to become his subjects; and those who submit to his laws in this kingdom *below* are prepared for the kingdom *above*. There are, however, many that do not submit to them; these are mixed with those that do, and are like bad seed among the good. Well, they must both grow together now, but they will not always grow together. The day of judgment is coming, and that will be the harvest. Then the wicked will be burned, and the good will be laid up like precious wheat, as treasure in a storehouse.

We have then a short parable of "The Treasure." In the kingdom of heaven there is a rich treasure. The gospel is the field where it is to be found. Here are "durable riches."

We have another parable of "The Merchantman." He was trying to find out some goodly pearls, that he might gain by them; and at last he met with one, and parted with everything he had that he might get it for himself.

"My heart exulting sings,  
For I this precious pearl have found."

"Jesus Christ," says Mr. Henry, "is a pearl of great price, a jewel of inestimable value, which will make those that have it rich, truly rich, towards God: in having him, we have enough to make us happy here, and forever."

The parable of "The Net" follows next. After explaining the wheat and the tares, you will at once see the meaning of this parable.

Then comes "The Householder." "Every Scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The teachers among the Jews were Scribes. Our Lord, therefore, was now bringing up his disciples to be teachers, and he meant

by this that if they were good teachers, they would be like a good householder, who had both old and new things to set at his table.

We are told, at the close of this chapter, that people were everywhere astonished at Christ's wisdom; especially were they surprised who heard him speak where he was brought up. His reputed father was a carpenter; and they said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" But the knowledge of Christ was that of the Son of God. Yet, because he did not take the form of a rich man, but "for our sakes became poor," the silly people thought it strange that he should know so much,



BLACK MUSTARD.



and be able to teach the way to heaven even better than the learned Scribes. "And they were offended in him." They did not like to be taught by him, and so, as they despised his teaching, "he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

### The Martyrdom of John the Baptist.—Christ Feeds the Multitude. —Christ Walks on the Sea.

#### MATTHEW XIV.

The first thing that is related in this chapter is the martyrdom of John the Baptist. He was killed by Herod the Tetrarch. This was not the Herod who killed the infants of Bethlehem, but one of his sons. *That* Herod was called Herod the Great, but *this* was called Herod Antipas. When his father died he divided the kingdom into four parts among his four sons, and this son had Galilee, of which he was tetrarch, that word signifying that he had a *fourth part* of the government.

This Herod, like his father, was a bad man. His brother Philip having lost his power and retired into private life, Herod lured away his wife, Herodias, who, being a wicked woman, was easily induced to leave Philip, and marry Herod. John the Baptist had boldly reproofed him for this crime, and he cast John directly into prison, and, indeed, would have killed him at once; but as John was esteemed by the people as a great prophet, he feared that they might rise and rebel, and so he contented himself with confining him.

At last his death was determined. Herod kept his birthday with all the splendor of a prince, and there was a merry dance. Among the rest, "the daughter of Herodias was there." She, too, had deserted her unfortunate father. We are not then surprised that she could be guilty of the cruelty she afterwards displayed, for she seems to have been an apt scholar in following the wicked example of her mother. This young creature danced before the court, and Herod was so much delighted that, to show his satisfaction, he declared, with an oath, that she should have anything she asked, even to the half of his kingdom: not that he would have given half his kingdom away, but this was an

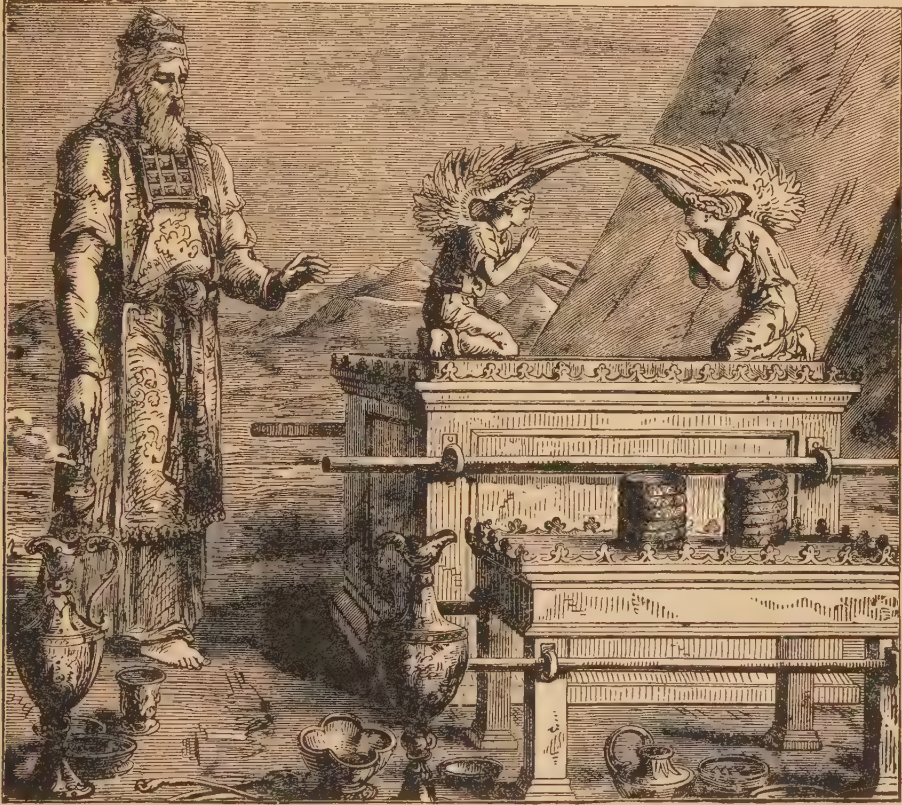
Eastern method of speaking, which allowed the person to whom it was addressed to ask a very great favor. You remember that Ahasuerus made the same promise to Esther. Esther, however, saved many lives by her request; but this wretched young creature asked for the life of one of the most excellent of men: she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Her mother urged her on to make this request, but she was as wicked as her mother in making it. When we are told to sin, even a parent's commands are not to be obeyed, because God is above our parents, and all sin is an offense against God. It was not, however, enough that she should ask the head of John the Baptist, but she must have it in a charger, or large dish. This was to satisfy her mother that there was no delay, but that John was actually put to death; and also to prevent Herod's changing his mind, that, on more sober reflection, his heart should not shrink back from the murder. The Evangelists say, "the king was sorry; nevertheless, for his oath's sake," he granted the request. Such an oath had better have been broken than kept. The deed was a far more wicked thing than breaking his word. However, he "sent and beheaded John in the prison;" and the young Salome took the head and handed it to her mother, who satisfied her evil eyes with the sight of her faithful reprov-er's countenance, quiet in death.

And now for a while Herod, Herodias, and Salome were most likely at ease—for conscience often goes to sleep, but only to wake again in a greater fright; but at last it must have been let loose upon them like a roaring lion, when God punished them for their sins. History tells us that when Herod had put away his lawful wife to make room for Herodias, Aretas, king of Petrea—who was father of the former—made war against Herod, and totally destroyed his army. Moreover, at the instigation of the wicked Herodias, he tried to dethrone his brother Agrippa, who ranked higher than he, bearing the royal title, and not that of Tetrarch. Agrippa, however, outwitted him, and procured his banishment to Lyons, where he and Herodias disgracefully died. Salome is also reported to have come to an awful end, and if she had a moment for thought she must have remembered her cruelty to John the Baptist; for going over the ice in winter, it is said the ice broke,



and she slipped in up to her neck, and her head was cut off by the sharpness of the ice. "Thus," says a great writer, "God required her head for that of John the Baptist, which, if true, was a remarkable providence."

When Jesus heard that John was cruelly put to death, he left the place to avoid Herod, for he had yet many works of mercy to do



THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE JEWS BEFORE THE ARK.

JESUS IS NOW THE WHOLE WORLD'S HIGH PRIEST BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD.

before he should leave the world. On his departure, multitudes followed him, and "he healed their sick."

Having led them into a desert place, the people were very hungry and weary, and Jesus felt compassion for them, But there were no less than "five thousand men, besides women and children;" and how were so many to be fed? All that the disciples had were five loaves

and two fishes; and what were they among so many? With Jesus nothing was impossible. "He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." You see Jesus would not take a meal without looking up to heaven for a blessing. "And they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments twelve basketsful." This was indeed a miracle; and no one could have done this if he had not had power from on high.

Jesus now dismissed the multitude, and sent his disciples across the sea of Galilee, while he went up into a mountain to pray.

In the midst of this night the ship in which the disciples were sailing was overtaken with a violent storm, and they were in the greatest danger of going to the bottom. The Jews divided the night into four parts, relieving their guards on the watch-towers every three hours, and so they reckoned time by these watches. "And in the fourth watch of the night," which was between three and six in the morning, Jesus went to the disciples, "walking on the sea"—another proof of his divine power, who could make the sea, where he pleased to tread, as solid as the earth itself. The disciples were more frightened at the appearance of Christ than at the storm; but Christ spoke kindly to them. And Peter, having asked his leave, went to meet him on the water, for he could make it as firm for Peter as for himself. Peter went a little way, but his faith in Christ's power failed him, and he began to sink; and then he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus caught him by the hand, lifted him up, reproved him for his want of faith, and led him safely to the ship. As soon as they were in the ship the sea was calm. All the passengers and crew saw most plainly that Jesus possessed nothing less than Almighty power, to do what he did, and then "came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

After this they landed in Gennesaret, where Christ performed more miracles.



## Christ Cures the Daughter of the Syro-Phœnician Woman, and Feeds the Second Multitude.

### MATTHEW XV.

Jesus now left the land of Gennesaret, and went into the coasts or borders of Tyre and Sidon, two principal cities of Phœnicia—a renowned country at that time. And a woman of Canaan, or Phœnicia,—for both names meant the same,—met him. You have probably often heard her called the Syro-Phœnician woman, a name given to persons in that part, because Phœnicia bordered on Syria, and, indeed, it had formerly been a part of it by conquest. This woman, it seems, had heard of the fame of Jesus, and she believed, very strongly, that he could help her out of the greatest distress.

She had a daughter grievously tormented by a violent disorder, resembling madness, and the evil spirit ruled over her troubled mind and body. The instant she saw Jesus she cried earnestly to him to have mercy on her and cure her daughter; and she called him “Lord,” showing her faith in his divine power, and “Thou Son of David,” owning him as the Messiah, the anointed great deliverer who was to save from sin. Jesus, however, did not notice her; but he knew how great was her faith, and he wished to show it to his disciples. Still she cried out, and still he was silent. The disciples then entreated him to grant her request, and send her away. But he said he was only sent “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” meaning that he intended to confine his own ministry to the Jews, and not then to have anything to say to the Gentiles—the people who were not Jews.

The woman was not, however, to be silenced; “she came and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me!” This was a very short prayer, but it was a very fit one and a very earnest one; and if you do but offer up this prayer from your heart, it must and will succeed, and the Lord will help you.

Jesus said, “It is not meet,” or proper, “to take the children’s bread and to cast it to dogs.” By the *children* he meant the Jews, the only

nation that maintained amongst them any of the pure worship of God, their heavenly Father; by the *bread* he meant the word of truth and life which he preached, and which was bread to the believing soul; and by *dogs* the Gentiles, for so they were esteemed by the Jews, being so unclean in their worship and practices. The woman knew what he meant, for in this way the Jews spoke of the Gentiles, and as she lived near them she knew their way of speaking.

Well, she would not take any denial. She knew that Christ could help her, and she still pleaded with him. "Truth, Lord," said she, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." As if she had said, I own all this, I am a Gentile, and thy favors belong to the Jews; I am no better than a dog, for I feel that I am a vile creature before Thee who knowest the heart,—a miserable sinner,—yet as dogs may pick up the crumbs, though they may not sit at their master's table, so in mercy grant me the smallest favor and I shall be happy.



JEWISH BAKER IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

Christ had now fully shown her faith—he commended it, he granted her request, and he cured her daughter.

This story teaches us to be earnest and persevering in prayer, and, though ever so vile, a gracious Saviour will at last have mercy on us.

From the coasts of Tyre and Sidon Jesus went to the sea of Galilee—to the parts near it; and there, upon a mountain, he was visited by "great multitudes," and he cured numbers with all sorts of disorders. There were at this time 4000 men with him, "besides women and children." After being on the mountain for three days, and using the little provision they might have with them, they needed some refreshment; and here again Jesus performed a great miracle, and multiplied seven loaves and a few little fishes, so that "they did all eat and were filled. And they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets-full."

After this he removed to Magdala, a place not far from Tiberias, and



after which it is thought Mary Magdalene was named, of whom we shall read by-and-by.

### Peter's Confession about Christ.

#### MATTHEW XVI.

When Christ came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he put his disciples' faith to the test; and, after asking them what the people in general thought and said about himself, he put the question to them, "But whom say ye that I am?" He knew well all that men said, but he asked the question to lead to the second question, by which he might get a confession of their faith, after all they had seen him do. Peter, who was always forward in speaking, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" that is, thou art the anointed, by the Holy Spirit of God, to be the King of thy spiritual people Israel;—the true Messiah, and not a mere man, but the divine Son of God. Jesus then commended his faith, and for the information of the disciples around, told him that such knowledge was only given from heaven. Many saw Christ do his miracles, but they did not see his divine glory as Peter did. On this rock, on the dignity and glory of Christ, the Son of God, as on a sure rock, will he build his church; on him all believers rest, who are what make up his church, and hell, with all its powers, shall not prevail against it. Christ told Peter also that he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. You know that I told you, in explaining the parables, what the kingdom of heaven meant, and that all that heard the gospel were in the boundaries of this kingdom, so that it means the spiritual privileges which Christians enjoy in this world, as well as their happy state in the next. Now, there are no *keys* used in this kingdom; the expression is what we call a figure of speech. The keeper of the key of a city is a person of *authority*, and when Christ told Peter he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and so on, he merely meant that he would intrust him, as his faithful servant, with the preaching of his gospel, so that he should have authority to explain what was his truth, since he had so nobly declared it; and what, under the guidance of his Spirit,

he declared to be so, should be so, and whatsoever he declared not to be so, should not be so.

Christ then commanded his disciples to be still for the present, and not to make him known as "the Christ, the Son of the living God"; for, had they done so, the Jews would have proclaimed him as their king, but he came into the world for a very different purpose than that of reigning as an earthly monarch. From this time, therefore, he more fully explained to his disciples why it was that he would not be an earthly king, and that he must suffer, be killed, and raised again the third day. Peter, indeed, could not bear to hear of this, for he loved his Master, and could not without grief think of his suffering, besides which he would rather have seen him king over the Jews. But our Lord reproved him, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" intimating that the evil spirit had suggested the thought of opposing his final suffering, for with that he was to triumph over Satan's kingdom.

He then warned his disciples of the great dangers to which they would be liable if they were true to his cause, and that they must always consider themselves like men having a cross to carry, on which they were to be executed, an allusion they well understood as a mode of execution then in practice.

## The Transfiguration of Christ.

### MATTHEW XVII.

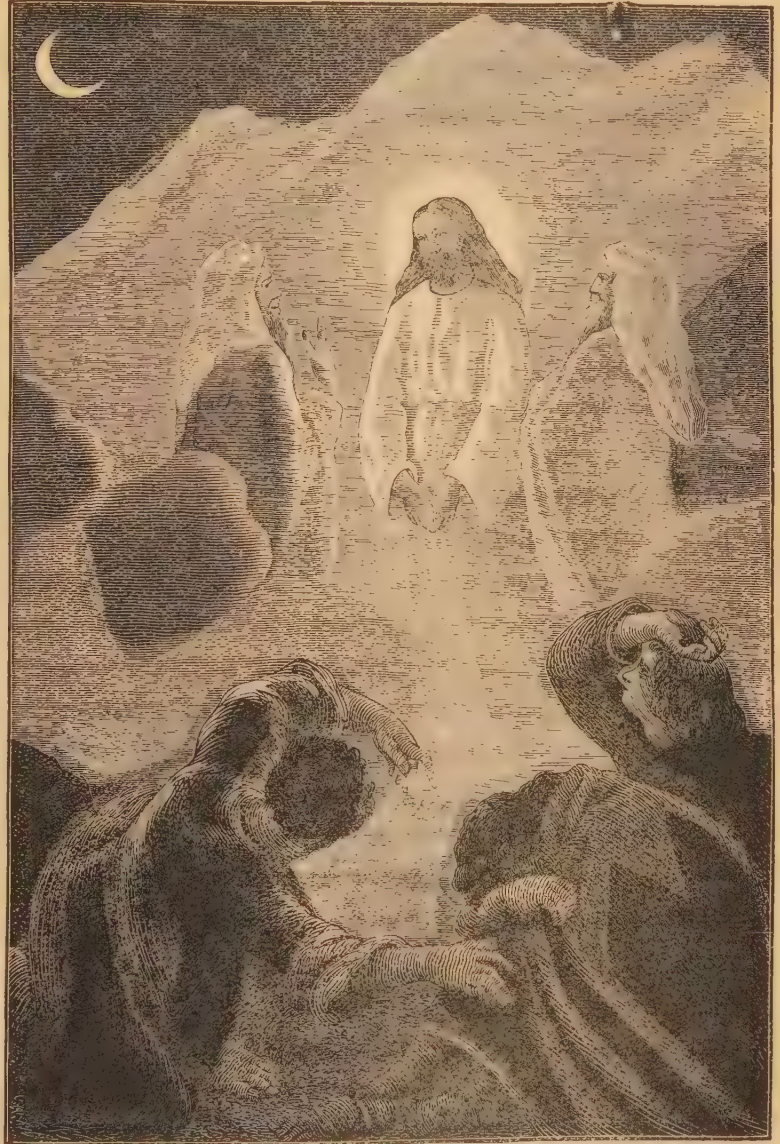
We come next to one of the most interesting and impressive scenes in our Saviour's life on earth. He had drawn from the willing lips of Peter, and with the free assent of the others, the frank avowal of their belief that he was the Son of God; he had told them, once and again, the story which had saddened their hearts, of his coming death by crucifixion at the hands of his cruel persecutors; and when they had urged that this must not, should not be, he had calmly, but decidedly, rebuked their lack of faith.

But his heart was full of tenderness, and that they might more clearly comprehend the glory which he had left in coming to earth, and the glory which should follow the completion of his plan of redemp-



tion, when he should return to heaven, he determined to give them such a glimpse as they should be able to bear of the condition of the glorified saints above, and of the necessity of his death, resurrection, and ascension.

For this purpose he takes with him the three favorite disciples, Peter, James, and John, and as the evening shadows are falling, leaves the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi, in the extreme north of Palestine, where he had been staying for several days, and commences the ascent of one of the southern slopes of Mount Hermon. Wearily did he and his chosen disciples climb the lofty moun-



TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

tain, till at last, toward midnight, they are within full sight of the highest of the snow-clad summits of the mountain, which, under the bright light of the moon, towers up nearly 9000 feet above the sea. Here,

perhaps, beneath the friendly shelter of some wide-spreading cedar, he withdraws a little from them, to engage, as usual, in prayer. The three disciples, meanwhile, wearied with their climbing, cast themselves down, and are speedily wrapped in slumber. After a while they are conscious of an intense light, which penetrates even through their closed eyelids; and, half-dazed by the suddenness of their awaking, they gaze, astonished, at the scene before them. It is not the light of the moon, though that is shining high in the bright sky of the mountains of Palestine; it is the face of their glorified Lord, shining more brightly than the sun, and illumining the whole atmosphere about them; on that glorious face there are no marks of weariness, care, or sorrow; it is radiant with beauty and joy. The poor, travel-stained robes in which he had climbed, with them, the hills that night, are no longer soiled or frayed, but "white as the light," "shining, exceeding white as snow," more brilliant far than the pure snows on Hermon's summit above them; and while his whole person thus glows with heavenly light, two other forms, glistening, though less brilliantly, with the same heavenly radiance, stand on either side of him. By a sudden intuition the disciples at once recognize them as Moses and Elijah, the greatest lawgiver of Israel and the most renowned and honored of the prophets; they had been in heaven, the one fifteen hundred and the other nine hundred years, and now they have come to do homage to him who had left his throne above, to fulfil the provisions of the law and the predictions of the prophets.

The disciples are dumb with astonishment and awe; they seem to themselves to be in a dream; yet every sense is widely and intensely awake. As they gaze, they listen, and lo! these heavenly visitants are talking, in tones of reverence, with their Master; they are speaking of his coming death at Jerusalem, and the glorious redemption which he will thereby accomplish. Peter, uplifted by the ecstatic vision, and "not knowing what he said," exclaims at once, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." His idea seems to have been that, in such goodly company, and with so much of heaven's own glory around them, it was far better for them to remain perma-



nently than to go back to Galilee or to Jerusalem, and to be subjected to the cruel persecutions of the Scribes and Pharisees. No answer was made to the bold speech of the impulsive disciple, and suddenly a bright yet dense cloud overshadows the whole group, and a still deeper awe overwhelms them as they pass into the cloud; and from the cloud proceeds a voice, tender, yet terrible in its tenderness, and it utters these words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." The affrighted disciples fall upon their faces, and so remain until Jesus comes and touches them, and says, "Arise, and be not afraid." Then, lifting up their eyes, they see their Lord and Master only, and in his ordinary apparel. These three disciples never forgot that scene. Two of them, John and Peter, referred to it expressly in their writings,\*and the third, the first apostolic martyr,† was very soon admitted to see the glory of his ascended Lord, in the sanctuary above. But the object which Jesus had in view to confirm their faith in him as the Son of God, the Redeemer from sin, and the one atoning Sacrifice, was accomplished. Thenceforth, in a higher sense than the other disciples or apostles, they were his witnesses; for them Moses and Elijah had appeared in adoring reverence of their Lord; for them they had spoken of his death and sacrifice; to them there had come "the voice from the excellent glory," proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God; they had been, above all others, the eye-witnesses of his majesty.

As Jesus and his three disciples descended from the mountain in the morning they found themselves suddenly translated from the glory of the heavenly state to the cares, anxieties, and distresses of this mortal life. The nine disciples who had been left behind in the vicinity of Cesarea Philippi had found their faith tested, and proved insufficient, in a case of possession by evil spirits, accompanied by epilepsy. It had been brought to them by the father and some cavilling Scribes, and they had attempted to cast out the evil spirits, perhaps relying upon their own power, perhaps with but weak faith in the power of Christ, and had failed utterly. Taunted by the Scribes, surprised and mortified

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\* John i, 14; Revelation i, 14; 2 Peter i, 17, 18. † Acts xii, 2.

at their failure, they were utterly despondent, when Jesus appeared upon the scene, and, with a word, cast out the spirits and healed the child. To these weak disciples he administered in private a mild reproof for their want of faith, but showed them the necessity of prayer and fasting to accomplish the desired miracle.

In this chapter we also read of Christ's paying the tribute money at Capernaum. This was a half-shekel, paid yearly, for the service of the

temple. As he was the Son of God he was not liable to pay a tribute, but, lest offense should be taken on account of his refusal, he preferred to do it. Yet it appears he who had the world at his command chose to be so humble and poor for our sakes that he had not the



THE JEWISH SHEKEL.

small sum wherewith to pay this tribute money. So he worked a miracle to obtain it. He chose so to do, to show his disciples that if he was poor it was not because he was obliged to be so, but because he chose to be so, and to give them additional proofs that he knew all things and could do all things. He knew that in the midst of the sea there was a fish that had swallowed the sum of money he wanted, and he told Peter to go and cast in his hook and catch him, and pay with the money the tax that was demanded for him and Peter.

## Christ teaches Humility, Kindness, Self-denial, and Forgiveness of Injuries.

### MATTHEW XVIII.

Christ here teaches us not to be proud. His disciples asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Our Lord knew their thoughts; he knew also that they had been talking to one another about this subject. They did not yet clearly understand that his kingdom was to be a spiritual kingdom; and, supposing that he would yet reign over the Jews in Jerusalem, they had almost quarrelled among themselves about who had the right to be his chief officers in managing his government.



"Peter was always the chief speaker, and already had the keys given him, and he expects to be Lord Chancellor or Lord Chamberlain of the Household, and so to be the greatest. Judas had the bag, and therefore he expects to be Lord Treasurer; which, though now he come last, he hopes will then denominate him *the greatest*. Simeon and Judé are nearly related to Christ, and they hope to take place of all the great officers of state, as princes of the blood. John is the beloved disciple, the favorite of the prince, and, therefore, hopes to be the greatest. Andrew was first called, and, therefore, why should he not be preferred?"

Mr. Henry supposes that some such thoughts as these passed between them when they asked Christ to settle the matter. A little child happened to be near, and Jesus took and set it in the midst of them, and told them that unless they were as humble as that little child they could never enter into his kingdom—the kingdom of heaven; and that the humblest among them was the greatest.

Again, Christ here teaches us not to give offense. We should be careful, as much as possible, to offend nobody in any way. But the offense of which he here speaks is particularly against his humble followers and servants. We must not despise one of these his little children, how poor and despised soever he may be by a wicked and sneering world.

Christ also here teaches us self-denial, to part with things that we even dearly love, rather than lose our souls. He tells us that we are to cut off our hand and foot and pluck out our eye rather than let them stand in the way of our salvation. He does not, however, mean that we should really do so, but he does mean that whatever hinders it, if it be even as dear to us as these parts of our body, we must be ready to give it up. An amusement, though ever so delightful, if it leads us into sinful habits and company, must be parted with. A friend and companion that would draw our hearts away from Christ, though we love him ever so much for his kindness in other respects, must also be parted with. Many such right hands must be cut off, and many such right eyes must be plucked out.

Another thing here taught is forgiveness of injuries. And this is a

very hard thing indeed to learn. When Christ talked on this subject Peter wished to know how many times he might be offended by another, and yet forgive him. "Seven times?" said he. "Yes," said Jesus, "as much as seventy times seven." It is not likely that any one would offend as often as this, so that our Lord meant that we should always be ready to forgive those who injure us.

Our Lord enforces forgiveness by a parable about a steward that owed his lord ten thousand talents (nearly \$200,000), and yet he forgave him his debt; but a fellow-servant happening to owe the steward only a hundred pence (about \$34), though he had been so kindly treated by his lord under like circumstances, yet cruelly threw his poor fellow-servant into prison till he should pay him every farthing. His lord, however, heard of it, and, as the steward's debt was still due in law, to punish him for his cruelty he laid hold of him and threw him into prison also.

God forgives us our sins, though they are great as the ten thousand talents; we ought, therefore, surely to forgive the hundred pence due to us from others, and to pass by their little offenses when they are ready to express any sorrow that they have done us injury; and, even if that be not the case, we should not render evil for evil, but, contrariwise, blessing. We have seen a hard-hearted man softened by receiving kindness for injuries.

### **Christ receives Little Children.—Converses with a Rich Young Man.**

MATTHEW XIX, 13-30.

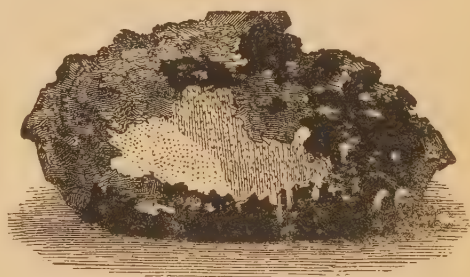
In this chapter we read of little children being brought to Christ, that he might bless them and pray over them, as it was usual with the Jews to do. Most likely they were parents, or it might be friends, who brought these children to Jesus. Children should feel themselves very happy when they have parents or friends who take them to Christ and ask for his blessing upon them. They can not now do this exactly in the same way, for Christ is ascended up into heaven, but they can



take them in prayer, and, though Christ is in heaven, he can still bless them there.

The disciples thought that these parents were troublesome, but Christ did not think so, nor will he ever think you troublesome for going to him. He says, "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." What he said to the disciples he says now: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Another thing here recorded is a conversation of Christ with a rich young man. This young man was desirous of going to heaven, and wished to know what he should do to enable him to get there. In this respect he was better than some people, who hope to go to heaven when they die but live all their days as if they cared nothing about it. He called Christ "Good Master,"—or good Teacher,—but Christ told him there was no one good but God, and as he only considered Christ as a teacher, and did not see his divine glory, he was wrong to give any human being the title of good.



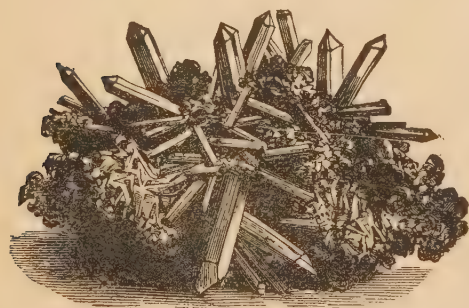
EASTERN GOLD.

Jesus told this young man, who had no notion of believing in him as a Saviour, but only thought of doing something to become eternally happy, that if he would keep the commandments all would be right. The young man said that he had kept them all. He did, indeed; but knew little of his own heart to say so, for a wrong thought breaks the commandments as well as a wrong word or deed. He should, as Mr. Henry observes, instead of saying, "All these have I kept, what lack I yet?" rather have said, with shame and sorrow, "All these have I broken, what shall I do to get my sins pardoned?" and thus have, at least, avoided his claim of self-righteousness.

Christ, however, soon put him to the test. He proved that he was an idolater, and so broke the very first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." He did not, indeed, bow to idols wrought out of gold and silver, as the heathen did, but still he loved

his gold and silver above everything besides—he gave his heart to his riches, and that was sin enough. Jesus told him to sell everything he had, and give to the poor, and follow him. Not that Christ requires this of us; he leaves us to enjoy what his providence gives us, and be thankful for it; but here was a particular case, which put this young man's heart to the test, for "when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions"; and he could not give these up to enter into life.

After the young man was gone, our Lord showed his disciples, from this example, how difficult it was for a rich man to enter heaven. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." That is, it is a great difficulty for a rich man, surrounded with the snares of riches, to enter into the kingdom—for this is what the words mean.



EASTERN SILVER.

This incident led Peter—who was as impulsive as ever, and had, moreover, some of the oriental disposition to extol his own sacrifices and to seek to have them noticed and rewarded—to ask, "Behold, we have

forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Of this boasting inquiry Mr. Henry well remarks: "Alas! it was but a poor all that they had forsaken; one of them (Matthew) had, indeed, quitted a place in the custom-house; but Peter and the most of them had only left a few boats and nets, and the appurtenances of a poor fishing trade; and yet see how big Peter there speaks of it, as if it had been some mighty thing: 'Behold, we have forsaken all!'" However, what they had left was their all, and Christ accepts of a little sacrifice where we can not make a great one; and in answering his question Christ wisely reminded him that his rewards were mainly in the future life, and that many who had supposed themselves to be first should be last, and the last should be first.



The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.—Christ foretells his Sufferings.—The two Blind Men.

MATTHEW XX.

This chapter contains four things, which we shall briefly notice in the order in which they stand.

First.—*The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.*

Here our Lord compares the kingdom of heaven—or the season of proclaiming the gospel to poor sinners—to a person who kept house and hired servants. Being in want of some to work in his vineyard, he “went out early in the morning to hire laborers.” “And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.” Our Lord here means a coin called the Roman penny, which was of more value than ours, and equal to about seventeen cents of our money; this, indeed, was low for wages, but they differ very much in all parts of the world, and even in our own country, in some parts not being more than half what they are in others.

Several hours after the householder went out, and finding more laborers wanting work he hired them also. Three hours after that he employed some more to work, and three hours after that still more. And now it drew toward the end of the day. “And about the eleventh hour, and within an hour of finishing work, he, seeing some more standing idle, hired them also.”

After they had done their work he paid them, and gave every man a penny; so that you see he gave just as much to those he employed last as to those he employed first, though, of course, they had done but very little, while the others had done much work.

Those that had done much work began to complain on seeing the others paid as much as they were; but the good man of the house told them they had no right to do so, for he had done them no wrong; they agreed to work for a penny, and he had given them their penny; and if he chose to pay the others as much as he had paid them, though they had done less, he had a right to do as he pleased with his own.

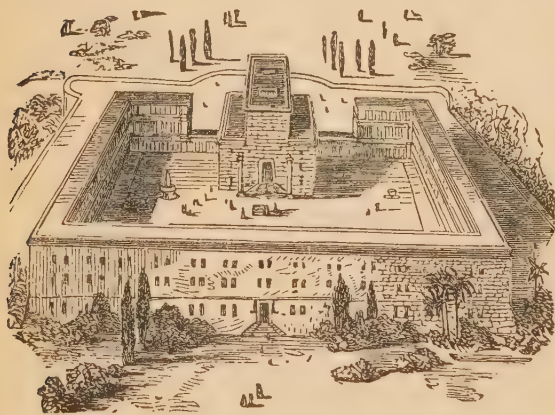
Now, the Jews were very jealous of the Gentiles, or nations not of

the Jews, and so selfish that they could not bear to hear of the grace of God being bestowed upon them, after they themselves had, for so many ages, been ranked among the servants of God. This parable was, therefore, to reprove their selfishness, and to show that God has a right to do with all nations as, in his grace, he pleases; and, also, it teaches us that if he gives us any mercies, and especially the blessings of heaven at last, it is not according to what we have done—for our services are but poor at the best,—but according to his own great generosity and grace.

The second thing our Lord here mentions is the sufferings which were coming upon him. These he had twice before named to his dis-

ciples, and so he prepared their minds for the terrible event of his death.

The third thing is a singular petition made to him, through their mother, by the sons of Zebedee, James and John, who were two of his first disciples. It was no less than that they should have the first places of honor in his kingdom; for, though he had told them of his



FORM OF SECOND TEMPLE.

death, they seemed either not to understand it, or to suppose—which was most probable—that after his death he would mount the throne of Judah, and become king of the Jews: so they asked that they might sit nearest to him when he should be king—the one on his right, and the other on his left hand. The right hand of a person of rank was always considered to be a place of honor; but Cyrus, the great Persian king, of whom we read in Scripture, used to place the guests he valued near his left hand, because his heart was on that side of him, and he thought that being placed near that was a great sign of his affection.

Our Lord replied to the ambitious disciples, “Ye know not what ye ask.” They were pleasing themselves with the prospect of honors,



when all the time there was nothing but suffering before them. And he said, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" To this they replied, "We are able." They thought that if they could have the dignity at last, a little pain or suffering would be of no consequence in the way. Jesus then let the disciples know that they should, indeed, drink of the same cup with himself, and so be partakers of a great honor; but that cup should be sufferings; and, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." The honors of the kingdom of heaven were, however, not given by him, who was in our flesh, but by his Father, God, who is a Spirit; and mortals were not to have their pride and curiosity gratified about what he would please to do in heaven.

The fourth thing in this chapter is the petition of two blind men, who were "sitting by the way-side," and "when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!" This was a request that Jesus would not deny. "The multitude rebuked them." Some who were his real friends thought, perhaps, that they were troublesome, and his enemies did not like their honoring him by calling him "Lord," and "Son of David"; but "Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

"Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!" is a cry that Jesus still hears.

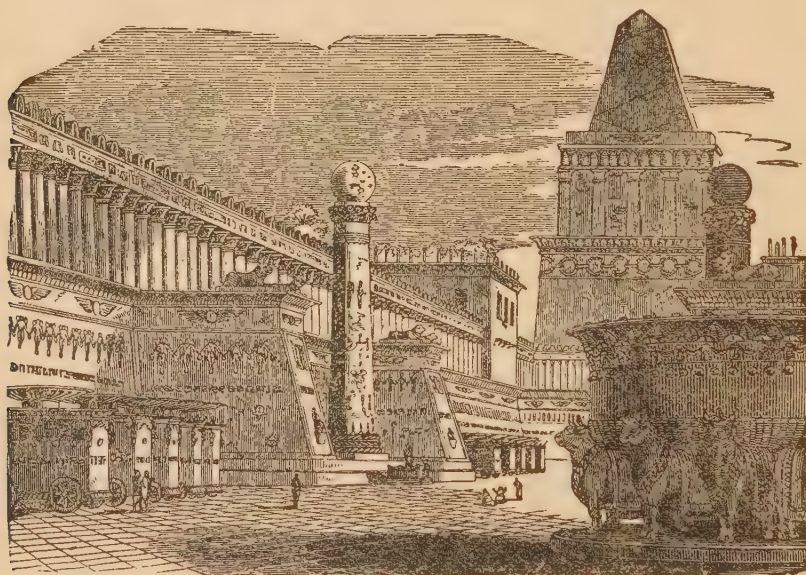
### Christ's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.

#### MATTHEW XXI.

The first thing which is related in this chapter is the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

Having commanded two of his disciples to go into a neighboring village, where they would find an ass tied, and a colt with her, which they were to bring to him, they did as they were told; and there—as he had said who knew all things—they found the beasts ready for his use. "And they brought the ass and a colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon."

Christ was followed by a multitude wherever he went. His fame in doing good caused many to go to him to receive benefits, and others went to see this wonderful person. These strewed the way on which he was to ride, some with their garments and some with branches of trees, among which it is supposed were quantities of beautiful roses, which grew in those parts. This was a method of paying honor to great persons, and is still practised in the same parts of the world, and was intended to be in honor of Christ. And the



INTERIOR VIEW OF ANCIENT TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM.

people cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" Hosanna means "Save, I beseech," or "help us, we beseech thee, thou Son of David, the Messiah!" words which were used by the people at the feast of tabernacles.

Now, "all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." The prophecy here quoted is found in Zachariah ix, 9, and by Sion is meant Jerusalem. Here Christ claimed authority, being

King over his church, and in token of it he rode, as the judges of old, on an ass. At this time, indeed, the great, and they only, rode upon horses; so that Christ did not enter Jerusalem in worldly splendor, but still he entered it like one bearing a high dignity. And this fulfilment of prophecy was one of the many marks which the prophets gave, by which the Messiah was to be known. Had not Christ so gone into Jerusalem, one of the marks to show him as the true Messiah would have been wanting; while every mark which so distinguished him was a confirmation of his character and office, and so must establish our faith in him.

Another thing here recorded is Christ's entrance into the temple, or rather that part of its courts in which were daily sold frankincense, oil, wine, and other requisites for sacrifice, such as doves, lambs, and oxen. It was near the time of the passover, and as many of these were then wanted, the courts were well stocked. This custom was most likely in imitation of the heathen, who did the same in their temples. Among the traders were also money changers; these were persons who accommodated the people with proper coin for any foreign coin which they had taken from any of the neighboring nations with whom they traded, and in so doing they overreached their customers, and were guilty of shameful extortions. All these things made our Lord very indignant; he could not bear to see the house of God profaned and such wickedness practised, and he cast out the dealers, and "overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves"—a place as bad as the caves in which robbers hid who infested Judea.

That Christ should have disturbed these people, and, though numerous, have driven them out in the midst of their gains, and for the time have spoiled their trade, is a proof that they were overawed by something in him, while, their own consciences being guilty, they were the more easily affrighted when they were so attacked.

Returning in the morning to Jerusalem, having slept in the quiet village of Bethany, which was only two miles from the city, it is said



"he hungered." Jesus hungered! Think on this; he who was the bread of life was himself hungered! Seeing a fig tree growing in the way, he would have refreshed himself with a fig; but, though it had plenty of fine leaves, it appears that it had no fruit, and he pronounced sentence upon the tree: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away." This was a sign by which he taught his disciples that the Jewish nation, which made such appearance of being as the garden of the Lord, were like nothing but the fig tree, which bore only leaves, and no fruit. And it

teaches us also that mere show is not what Christ looks for, but he expects us to bear something good, if we profess to bring forth the fruits of holiness.

The chief priests could not let Christ alone, and as soon as he had returned to the temple, and began to teach the people the way to heaven, they beset him, and wished to know who authorized him to do his work. Now, they might have easily seen by the miracles that he did that he was divinely authorized, and if any doubt had been in their



ROBBERS LYING IN WAIT.

minds and they had humbly asked him for information, he would have given it; but knowing the obstinate hatred and malice of their hearts, that they would not be convinced, he gave them no direct reply, but only put a question to them which obliged them to keep silence.

They—the chief priests—had hated John the Baptist, and, it was believed, had urged Herod to imprison him, but the people had always regarded him as a prophet, and would not allow him to be spoken against. So Christ asked them whether John's baptism was from heaven or of men? One of the two it must be. Now, they felt that

they could not say it was from heaven, for then Christ and the people could justly have reproached them for not believing on him, and for persecuting a prophet of God ; and yet, if they said it was from men, they would equally expose themselves to difficulty, since the people believed otherwise, and would have been enraged against them. So they told a falsehood, and said, " We can not tell." Then our Lord told them that as they would not answer his question, he would not answer theirs, and so he confounded them.

After this he instructed the people by interesting parables. The first of these is usually called " The Two Sons." By this he taught the sin of pretending to works of righteousness, and not doing them.

Our Lord afterwards said, " Hear another parable " ; and then spoke the parable of " The Husbandmen."

This parable was to show how they had treated the servants of God whom he had sent to them ; for they had ill-used and killed his prophets, one after another, and in the end God had sent himself, the Son of God, but they used him no better, and were now conspiring to put him to death.

We should have supposed that the priests and Scribes would have felt ashamed when they found that the parable described their wickedness ; instead of which they even then sought to lay hands on him, " but at the time they were afraid lest the multitude should take his part, as he was then high in favor with them."

There are two verses near the end of this chapter which we must just explain. In the forty-second verse you read, " Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner ? " This is a figure of speech, and refers to some words in the hundred and eighteenth Psalm. The church of Christ—or " the congregation of faithful men," of which it is formed—is compared to a building ; and,



FIG BRANCH.

as there is one stone which is of great importance to a building, and is called the chief corner-stone, because it supports the building, so Christ is the support of all his church, and the whole building rests upon him. But the Jewish builders—the Scribes, Pharisees, and priests—would have had a church without him. They rejected Christ; and so he was the stone which these builders refused, but which was, nevertheless, the chief foundation which God laid in Zion, or his church, on which sinners, in every age of the world, must build their hopes of salvation. Our Lord goes on to say in the next verse but one, the forty-fourth, “Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.” The Jews knew very well what our Lord referred to. They had two ways of stoning criminals; the one was by throwing stones upon them, the other was by throwing them from a high place down upon stones; and as in both cases the criminal died, so he intimated to the Jews that, as the person falling on the stone does not hurt the stone, but only himself, so those who opposed him would be their own ruin, and on whomsoever his power fell it would be like the falling stone, crushing the individual beneath its weight.

### **The Parable of the Marriage Supper.—Conversations of Christ with the Pharisees.**

#### MATTHEW XXII.

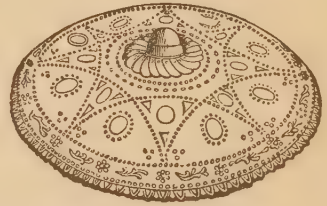
This chapter begins with another parable, known by the name of “The Marriage Supper; or the Great Supper.”

This parable had a like meaning with the last. The blessings of Christ’s kingdom were offered to the Jews, but they rejected them, and ill-treated his servants, who invited them to feed on the bread of life. Their city, Jerusalem, would therefore be attacked by the Roman armies, and their city burned. The heathen nations, who were as the people on the highways, poor and wretched, without the knowledge of God, were then to learn about Jesus Christ, and when they should hear the glad news of salvation through him, declared by his faithful servants, they would accept of his invitation and so hasten to the feast.



We must now notice the conversations of our Lord with his adversaries. Mortified at his parables, the Pharisees took counsel together to try and catch him saying something that they might accuse him of speaking against the emperor at Rome. The Jews had then a king, Herod ; but he held his crown under the Roman emperor—the people having been so far conquered as to pay tribute to him. So the Pharisees took with them some of Herod's cunning courtiers, and asked Christ if it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?—that is whether, according to the law of Moses, they should pay tribute to a heathen ? Now, if our Lord had said it was lawful, the people would have been enraged at him, for they did not like Cæsar, who was a Roman, taxing them, who were Jews ; and, if he had said it was not lawful, they would have carried him before the Roman magistrates, and have had him put

to death for teaching rebellion against Cæsar's authority. By such a subtle question, therefore, any other person would have been liable to be en-



EASTERN IVORY ORNAMENTS.

trapped ; but our divine Lord “perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites ? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription ?” meaning, whose likeness was that stamped upon the penny, as the queen's head is stamped upon the English coin, with her name and dignity around it. “They say unto him Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.”

Now, they could not say that he had taught rebellion against Cæsar, for having his coin in circulation among them was a sign that they were subject to his authority ; and so he hinted as much as that they were to give him his dues, while he left them to think what were the dues of Cæsar. And they could not say that he had set Cæsar above

their divine law ; for he told them they must at the same time give to God all that was due to him.

This prudence and wisdom confounded them, and they left him.

By-and-by the Sadducees came to him. This sect among the Jews denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at the last day ; indeed, they denied even a future state, and supposed that when they died there was an end of them forever. Now, they thought that they should perplex our Lord in teaching this doctrine if they questioned him about a curious case that perhaps had or at least might happen. Seven brothers had had the same wife, the first brother dying, and then the second, on to the last ; and so they married her one after the other, which they could do by the Jewish law. Then, said they, if the resurrection is to take place, what a curious difficulty she and they will be in, for whose wife is she then to be ? Our Lord, in reply, told them that they were quite mistaken ; that there was no marrying in heaven, and that all there were as angels—happy without the need of those domestic comforts which are wanted here. And, with respect to the resurrection, he referred to the language of their own Scriptures in such a way that they could not possibly contradict him : “ Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? ” This was the language of God to Moses at the burning bush ; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then all dead. Now, added Jesus, “ God is not the God of the dead, but of the living ” ; if these were never to rise again, and their spirits were not still living, he could not be called their God. Therefore, God is not the God of the dead, who are not, but of the living, who now exist. Our Lord would give no direct answer on state matters when asked about Cæsar, for his kingdom was not of this world ; but, when the Sadducees disputed a great truth, he directly declared it, for he came to bring “ life and immortality to light,” or to make them clear as the light of day, “ by the gospel.” The Sadducees supposed that when the body died the soul died with it ; but Christ gave them to understand the very contrary—that the soul did not die, and that the body would live with it. The

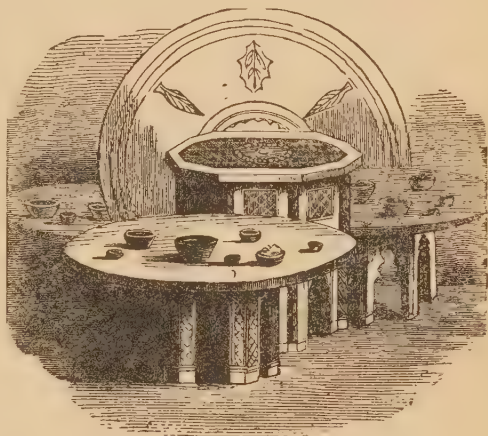
spirit lives, but the spirit is not a perfect man, and so there shall be a resurrection of the body to unite it to the spirit forever.

The Sadducees had nothing to say, and the people were all surprised at the powerful teaching of Christ.

The Pharisees were much vexed to find that our Lord had so put the Sadducees to shame, for they thought that he would gain all the people over to him; and, being jealous of his popularity, they resolved to try what further could be done to confound him. So they set their heads together, and got a clever lawyer of their body to attack him. But by a lawyer you must not understand one who practised the common law of the land, as our American lawyers do, but one who understood well the law of Moses, and

was accustomed to be looked up to by the people to explain it. The question which the lawyer put to Christ was, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" The Jews were used to quibble and dispute about a number of trifling things, and there were many opinions among them on this question, and so the lawyer hoped that by obtaining an answer from Christ he should set all those against him

who held the opinions which he opposed. But our Lord did not hesitate one moment to reply, and he said that the great commandment was to love God with all the heart; and who could dispute this—that God has the first claims on the love of his creatures? However, as all the commandments are great, he added, "The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; and what could they say against that being a great commandment? for if all men were to be guided by it, no one would ever do wrong to another. You know, indeed, that there are ten commandments, but all the rest are to prevent our oppressing or doing wrong to our neighbor, and so our Lord made here two great command-



EASTERN TABLES.



ments. The question, however, was which *one* was the great commandment, and his answer did not evade it, for the whole signified as much as this—that love to God is the great commandment; for love to our neighbor, if it be of the right sort, can only be exercised by him who truly loves God.

Christ now turned the tables, as we say, and on his part he began to question his adversaries; but they were equally defeated whether he answered or proposed the question. The question was, “What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?” As Christ means *the Messiah*, whom they were expecting, the teachers of the people and this skilful lawyer ought to have been able to make some reply to his question; but what they said was what any little child could have answered: “The Son of David.” Now, every one who had learned the least about the Messiah must have known that he was to spring out of the family of David. But on their answering this question, which they could not avoid, our Lord then added another, which arose out of it, and to which they found it difficult to reply: “He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” The words quoted are in the one hundred and tenth Psalm. The Jews understood these words to describe the Messiah, and they understood rightly—though now they did not receive that Messiah when they saw him, notwithstanding that he worked so many miracles among them, which showed him to be a most extraordinary person. Now, the Messiah was to spring from the line of David, and so he was his son after the flesh, though many generations in distance from him; yet David called him Lord. The great Jehovah is represented speaking to him, and telling him to sit upon his seat of dignity and power; and, in describing this, David, a prophet, speaking of what was to come to pass, said, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand.” Now, if he were David’s son, said Christ, how could he be his Lord? Is a son lord over his father? Certainly not. The Pharisees were puzzled, for they looked for some great *man* to come to be their Messiah, and did not see that the Messiah-Christ was to be

not only man in his flesh, but also THE SON OF GOD, THE LORD—Him in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Since, therefore, they could not see this grand part of the description of the Messiah, they could not make out how David called his son Lord, and so could not answer Christ, and were put to shame and silence. They who truly know Christ, know him now to be David's son and David's Lord; the son of David, as he was a man of his race, and yet the Son of God, and the "Lord of all"—reigning over all things, and the great Governor of his Church. And on this account they own and adore him.

After this no man durst ask Christ any more questions.

### Christ's Discourse Respecting the Wickedness of the Pharisees.

#### MATTHEW XXIII.

We need only notice, in this discourse of our Lord respecting the wickedness of the Pharisees, the principal charges he makes against them.

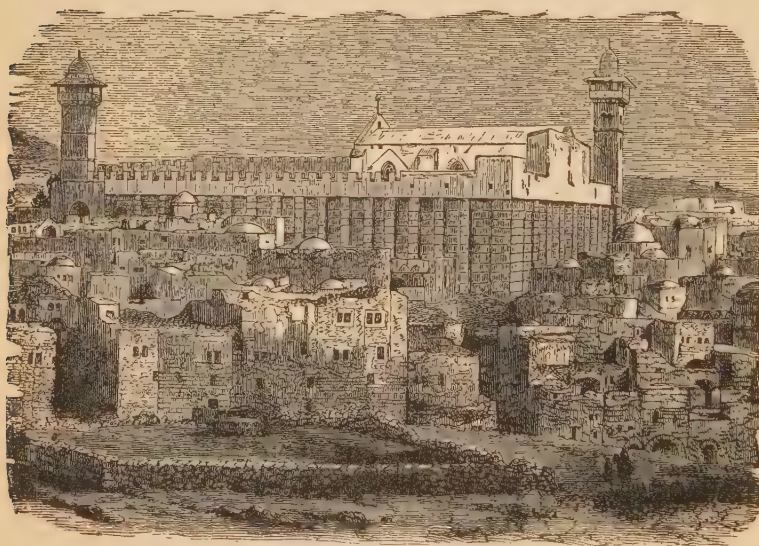
*Verse the fifth.*—*But all their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.* They were fond of making a show of religion, and did everything before men, instead of secretly before God. They wore great phylacteries, or pieces of parchment, on their foreheads and on the wrists of their left arms, on which were written certain words of the divine law, to make the people believe how much they tried to remember it. And as the Jews wore fringes on the edge of their garments to distinguish them from the heathen nations round about, so they, to distinguish themselves from others of their own countrymen, wore broader fringes than others.

*Verse the thirteenth.*—*But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* By woe is here meant sorrow, misery, and a threatening of dreadful punishment for such great wickedness as hypocrisy. By the kingdom of heaven is meant, not heaven itself,—for happily no man has power

to shut another out of heaven,—but what is called “the gospel dispensation,” or *the time of preaching the gospel* to perishing sinners, as I have before explained it to you. Now, by trying to prejudice the people against Christ—the Messiah who came into the world to open the gates of this kingdom and to preach the gospel to the meek—they did, as it were, shut the gates of this kingdom against them; and, not contented with refusing to enter in themselves, they both ruined themselves and others by persuading them not to enter in.

*Verse the fourteenth.—Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypo-*

*crites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.* It is said by some writers that the Pharisees, to seem very holy, prayed three times a day, and three hours at a time, so that they must have prayed nine hours



MODERN HEBRON; SHOWING THE GREAT MOHAMMEDAN MOSQUE.

HEBRON WAS KING DAVID'S CAPITAL BEFORE HE REMOVED TO JERUSALEM  
IT NOW CONTAINS ABOUT 5000 INHABITANTS.

day. But they did not pray from the heart. They repeated, over and over again, some forms of prayer, without their souls going out towards God in what they said. They also made money by their prayers, and this was their object, which was a vile abuse of the design of prayer, which is to ask blessings of God for ourselves and others. And, what was worse, under this pretence of praying they devoured widows' houses; that is, they imposed upon poor widows—from whom they very often took much of the money



left to them for their support—by pretending to pray for them better than they could pray for themselves.

*Verse the sixteenth.*—*Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor.* People were accustomed to offer gifts of gold for the use of the temple, and sometimes to swear or make oath that they would give certain gifts. Now, if they made oath to do anything, and merely said, “By the temple,” or in the name of the temple, “I will do it,” the Pharisees said they might break their promise if they pleased; but if they swore in the name of the gold vessels of the temple they must keep their oath sacred. But our Lord said this was wicked, for one sacred promise should be kept as much as another; and if there was any difference in point of dignity between the gold consecrated to the temple and the temple itself, the temple was the most noble, and the promise made by it ought rather to be kept. But He who knows men’s hearts saw that this was all hypocrisy, and that they made this distinction, as they did that regarding the altar and the gift upon it, from corrupt and hypocritical motives. Christ called these men blind guides, since they pretended to guide others in the way to heaven and could not see it themselves.

*Verse the twenty-third.*—*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* Mint, anise, and cummin are herbs. The Pharisees were very particular in giving the priests and Levites the tenth part of the value of everything that made their income, even to these small herbs; and they did not lose by it, for the priests made them due returns for setting this example. But they were unjust, unkind, and unfaithful to others; and so while they minded trifling things that cost them nothing, and turned to their advantage, they neglected to do justice and to be merciful, kind, and righteous in their dealings with others.

## Christ Foretells the Destruction of Jerusalem.

MATTHEW XXIV.

The temple of Jerusalem was a most splendid building, and king Herod had expended a great deal for its improvement, so that it was so grand that the Jews used to say, "He who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building."

The disciples one day, having taken particular notice of its fine marble columns and curious workmanship, pointed them out to Christ, that he might admire them too. Our Lord then told them, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down"; which really took place not a very long time afterwards, though there was then no probability that so fine and firm a building would or could be so easily destroyed.

The disciples were then more curious to know when this wonderful destruction should happen. Our Lord did not satisfy their curiosity, but gave them warning how they might know when it was coming on; that there should first be false prophets arising who should deceive the people; and so it was. Then there should be wars; and there were terrible wars for a long time between the Jews and the Romans, who then ruled over them, as between them and several other nations. There should also be "famine, pestilences, and earthquakes." There should likewise be cruel persecutions and murders of the followers of Christ; and, finally, the gospel should be preached to all other nations as well as to the Jews.

This would be a dreadful time. The Jews must then expect miseries never known before in the whole world. God was about to punish them for their many and great sins against him, but especially for the greatest of all sins—that of rejecting and hating Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. So dreadful would be the vengeance of the Roman armies when once Jerusalem should be besieged, that the moment there was an appearance of it, all Christians were advised to escape, and lose not a moment, but flee and hide themselves in secret places in the mountains. If they were walking to cool themselves on the tops of

their Eastern houses, they must not even return to pack up anything, but hasten down outside; if at work in the field, and their clothes lay at a distance, it would be unwise to risk delay by going after them; and unfortunate would the mother be that then had to escape with the burden of a child; or if the siege should happen in winter, miserable would it be for the poor creatures who had to hurry over bad roads and amidst swelling floods; or if on the Sabbath-day, when they were limited by the law to a short journey, it would hardly be possible to escape at all.

Then Jesus spake a parable or comparison about the fig-tree, and told them that these signs of the destruction of Jerusalem which he had given them would be as sure guides as were the leaves of the fig-tree, when they broke out, guides of the approach of the summer. But the exact time was a secret known only to God, though it would be sudden as the destruction of the world in the days of Noah.

The desolation should also be so great that, if but two were together, even one of these should perish while the other escaped, whether they were laboring in the field or grinding at the mill: "the one" should "be taken and the other left."

Hence he told them all to "watch," and be on the lookout for these signs, that they might be ready to escape.

### The Parable of the Ten Virgins.—The Parable of the Talents.— The Day of Judgment.

#### MATTHEW XXV.

This chapter is a continuation of the last, and refers to the same terrible event—the destruction of Jerusalem. But our divine Lord clearly glides from that awful subject into the destruction of the world and the day of judgment.

We must ask you to read the first thirteen verses of the chapter, or we shall have no pages to spare to explain much of the parable which they contain. It is usually called "The Parable of the Ten Virgins." It refers to a custom among the Jews, and still practised among people in Eastern nations. When two persons are married, the bride-



groom goes out at night to meet his wife. He has his friends with him, and she has hers, called here "ten virgins," or young unmarried women. Torches and lamps are always carried in these processions. Our Lord represents five of the virgins as foolishly forgetting to take any oil with them. When, therefore, the party were all in a bustle to trim their lamps and to light those which had gone out while they had fallen asleep, and to go to meet the bridegroom on his arrival at the house of her father, where the bride was, the foolish virgins had

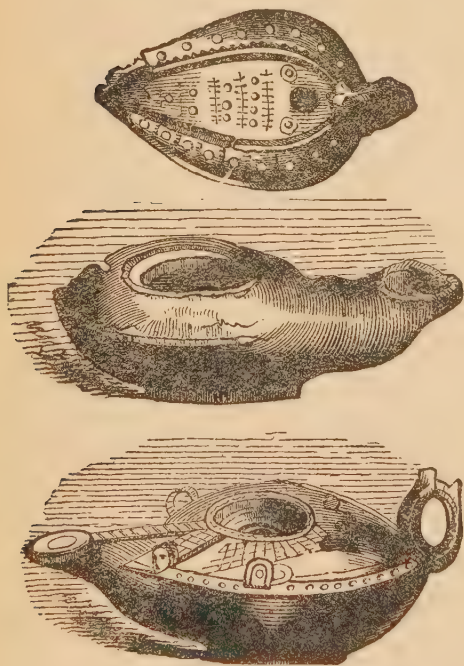
no time to buy or get oil elsewhere, and asked the other virgins to supply them. But as the others had only oil enough for themselves, they could not spare any to their foolish companions. So the foolish virgins had to leave the company to get oil; but before they could get back the procession was gone, the party had entered the bridegroom's house, and, agreeably to their custom, the door was shut, and no further admittance given to any.

By this our Lord teaches us that if we are not prepared with grace or holiness in our hearts when Christ comes to judgment, we shall be able to get none after; and, as the foolish

virgins were shut out of the bridegroom's chamber, so must we in such a case be shut out of heaven.

There is also another parable, which is known by the name of "The Parable of the Talents."

The design of Christ in this parable is to teach us all to use our time, and abilities, and money, and whatever we have, diligently, in the best way we can, to promote his glory. These are our talents, intrusted to us to use properly. The talent was a fixed weight of gold or silver; a golden talent was worth nearly fifty-seven thousand



ANCIENT EASTERN LAMPS.

dollars, and a silver one about sixteen hundred and sixty dollars; but some of our talents are of much more value than gold and silver, and must be answered for by even the poorest amongst us, for through them we must expect to secure to ourselves such unending pleasures and joys as all the wealth of earth could not purchase—no, not so much as a tithe of it.

The last thing in this chapter is a grand description of the day of judgment. Passing from the destruction of Jerusalem to that of our sinful world, our blessed Lord describes his second and final coming in all his glory, attended by all his angels and seated on his judgment throne. All nations, of all times, shall be raised from the dead and appear before him; and then he shall make one grand division between them, and separate forever the righteous from the wicked, just as a shepherd would divide his sheep from the goats.

Sheep and goats are not, indeed, generally seen together amongst us; we have very few goats; but in some countries abroad, especially about the hilly countries in Greece, there are flocks of both sorts of animals feeding together. Now, the righteous are often called in Scripture by the name of sheep, because they are thought to be good emblems of innocent, harmless, and pure persons, while goats, from various causes, are emblems of the opposite characters.

Having separated the two, the great and heart-searching Judge will place the righteous at his right hand, which is considered as the place of honor, and the wicked at his left hand, as a sign of their dishonor; or, to speak in other words, he will mark the righteous with his approval and the wicked with disgrace and shame. He will then invite the righteous, and say to them, "Come, ye blessed," and introduce them to his heavenly kingdom; while to the wicked he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed!" He will even notice and reward the acts of kindness done to those who love him, as if done to himself, and will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." While neglect, unkindness, and cruelty, shown towards those who love him, will equally be marked and punished; for he will say to the guilty, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." "And

these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

## The Passover.—The Sufferings of Christ.

MATTHEW XXVI.

When our blessed Jesus came into the world to save sinners, he knew what he had to suffer. He was to die that we might live. And now the time of his death began rapidly to approach: and he told his disciples that in two days the passover was to be eaten, in remembrance of the eating of the lamb at the escape of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and that then he was to be betrayed that he might be crucified.



ANCIENT WINE-PRESS.

The disciples soon found that it was but too true—they must lose their beloved Lord and Master. For "the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the people," who had so often shown their hatred to Jesus, because he exposed their wickedness to the people and reproved them for their hypocrisy and other crimes, now assembled together in the palace of the high priest, called Caiaphas, and con-

sulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. They, however, did not like to venture to do so just at the passover, for they feared lest there should be "an uproar among the people." The people had received great benefits from Jesus; many of them and their friends, who would travel from all parts of Judea to the feast, had been cured of their diseases by his kindness, and had seen the miracles which he had done, and it was, therefore, natural to suppose that if they had any gratitude about them they would avenge any insults offered to him.

A few days before the passover Jesus came to Bethany, a village near Jerusalem, and was invited to eat at the house of Simon the leper—very likely one who had been a leper and whom he had cured, and so he showed him this gratitude for his kindness. At all events he entertained Christ, and it is here related to his honor.



While Jesus was eating a woman approached him and poured some precious ointment on his head, which she had brought in an alabaster box. According to our customs this would seem very rude, and particularly free behavior in a female. But it was different in the Jewish country, and was a mark of very high respect, the ointment being expensive and the fragrant smell proceeding from it most grateful to all present. Some of the disciples thought the woman was extravagant; but Christ knew her motive in what she did, and commended her love. Who she was is not exactly certain, as some suppose she was Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, and others that she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. The fame of her kind act—her liberal token of love to Jesus—was, however, well known and spread abroad at that time; and wherever the gospel was preached this was mentioned to her praise.

And now the moment arrived when the sufferings of our gracious Saviour began. One of his disciples, Judas—the wretched man!—went to the chief priests and offered to deliver up Christ to them for thirty pieces of silver—the paltry price paid for a purchased servant, about eighteen dollars and fifty cents! They durst not take Christ publicly for fear of the people, but Judas offered to take them to one of his private retreats, and there to deliver him up; and with the greatest care he watched for the most favorable opportunity.

There were seven days in which the Jews ate their unleavened bread,—or bread not made of yeast or anything to ferment it,—and during this time the passover was celebrated. You remember that the reason of eating this bread was to keep the Jews in mind that they were delivered from Egyptian bondage in the greatest haste, so that they had not even time to mix the leaven with their dough, ready made in their troughs.

Jesus sat—or, more properly, leaned or lay down—at the passover with his disciples. The first passover was eaten standing, as another ad-



ANCIENT WINE-PRESS.

ditional sign of the haste in which the people were to escape; but this sign was afterwards not used, and now they lay down, leaning on their elbows, just as we do on a sofa, this being the fashion in the Jews' country, and is still so in that part of the world. While our blessed Saviour took the passover, he said to his disciples, "One of you shall betray me." So that he showed that he knew what wickedness was in the heart of Judas, and that he could have escaped from his treachery if he pleased, but he came into the world to give his precious life a ransom for sinners.

His disciples were very sorrowful, and all were afraid lest they should be tempted to do so wicked a thing as to betray their beloved Lord; and they asked with great concern, "Lord, is it I?" Then he said to them, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." They would all do this, for this was the way of eating, taking it out of one dish with their fingers, and not with knives and forks, as we eat; but then this was to show how villainous the man would be; for to eat together was the greatest sign of friendship, and so this showed his conduct to be as bad as it possibly could be. Yet Judas, in order to disguise himself before the other disciples, daringly asked, "Master, is it I?" and Christ said it was he.

Jesus then took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, as is now done, after his example, at the Lord's Supper; and in like manner he took the cup. When he gave the bread he said, "This is my body"—meaning this *represents* my body—to be broken for you; it could not actually be his body, for his body remained the same. So, also, he said when he took the cup, "This is my blood, of *the New Testament*"—that is, this represents my blood to be shed for sinners, and represents it by a different sign from that which has been used; hitherto the blood of beasts was shed as the sign that he was to die, but now and henceforth wine, the blood or juice of the grape, was to be the sign. Both of these—the bread and the wine—were to be taken, and afterwards to be continued in the church, and received by Christians in remembrance that Christ died for them—"for the remission of sins"; that is, the pardoning of sins.

## Gethsemane.—The Sufferings of Christ.

MATTHEW XXVI.—*Continued.*

It was now evening, and probably as late as ten o'clock, or the fourth hour of the night, according to the Jewish reckoning, when Jesus, after a long and tender conversation with his disciples and an earnest prayer for them in their trouble, now so close at hand, left the upper chamber, where the Passover feast had been eaten and the Lord's Supper instituted, and passed through the narrow streets of Jerusalem to the eastern gate, which led to the Mount of Olives. On their way he continued his loving exhortations and warnings to them. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night," he said; "for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." How merciful and gracious was our blessed Lord in this! He knew that these disciples, strongly as they were attached to him, would, when the actual time of danger came, all forsake him and fly. Yet, knowing that he would be left alone in his worst sufferings, he pitied their weakness, and promised to meet them again with blessings, after his resurrection. But Peter felt too strong in his love for Christ to believe that he should abandon his Master. "Though all men," cried he, "shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." The Lord knew Peter better than he knew himself, and saw, perhaps, in this very vehemence of his protestations that the evil in his heart was struggling with the



ONE OF THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.



good, and would for the time overcome it. He therefore said, very quietly, "Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." So near was the time of Peter's fall and disgrace, and yet so wholly unconscious was he of its approach. "Though I should die with thee," he protested, "yet will I not deny thee." Likewise also said all the disciples.

They had by this time descended the slope from the city gate to the bridge which spanned the Kidron ravine, crossed it, and were ascending the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives. Their destination was an inclosed garden or olive orchard, known as Gethsemane, from the oil-press which was near it, in which the oil was expressed from the ripe olives which abounded in that vicinity. It was in one of the secluded hollows of the western slope of the mountain, and was well known to the disciples as a place where their Master often went to pray.

As they drew near to it Jesus began to be in great distress of mind, and said to the disciples, while they were yet without the inclosure, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." His anguish of soul increased, and taking with him Peter, and James, and John, the three who had witnessed his transfiguration, he entered the inclosure. Turning to them with every feature indicating his agony of spirit, he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me." This craving and longing for human sympathy is perhaps the strongest evidence we could possibly have that he, the Son of God, had taken upon him our nature; that he was, in reality, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, and was a man of like passions with us, yet without sin, while he was also the Divine Redeemer. Having made this touching appeal to the three disciples for sympathy, "he went a little farther [Luke says, "about a stone's cast"], and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." After this earnest petition, he rose and came to the three disciples and found them sleeping, and said unto Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "He went away again the second time,

and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Luke adds these particulars: "that there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him"—a rebuke to his disciples, who, notwithstanding his earnest appeals, had not even watched with him. "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." Amid all this agony, he came again to his disciples, and again found them asleep; and when they were roused, they were still so dazed and heavy with sleep that they did not know what to answer him. A third time he departed to his chosen place of wrestling prayer, perhaps under the shadow of one of the old and spreading olive trees, and asked that the divine will might be accomplished, at whatever cost of suffering to him; and this time his prayer was heard and answered; strength was given to the weakened body, and thenceforth he welcomed the pain and suffering, for the sake of the redemption that should follow. Now, as he returned to his disciples he saw the lights and torches borne by the multitude descending from the gate of the city to the Kidron ravine and bridge, and knew that this was the company led by Judas. Addressing his disciples, he said, "Sleep on, now, and take your rest." The agony which had so crushed his spirit was gone, and he now needed not their watchful care, which hitherto they could not bestow. Angels had ministered to him. But it was now his turn to watch over them, for their enemies, as well as his, were at hand; the hour of their supreme temptation was coming; as for him, it had passed, and therefore he says: "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

Let us pause here, and inquire what was the cause of this terrible anguish of soul, which thus for a time overwhelmed our Lord, and made his "soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!" That it was not the fear of death, not even the painful and ignominious death of the cross, is evident from several considerations: he had known from the first that he should thus die, had conversed about it with his disciples, and with Moses and Elijah, if not without emotion,

yet without fear and without distress ; in the twelve or fifteen hours which followed his arrest, amid the insolence and insults of priests and rabble, of Roman soldiers and malefactors, amid the cruel tortures of the thorny crown, the scourging, and the terribly painful death of the cross, he manifested not the slightest fear ; his calm and dignified demeanor awed his judges, and on the cross his pardon of the dying thief, his care for his mother, his sublime prayer for his murderers, and his calm announcement of the completion of his work of redemption, all showed a spirit incapable of fear.

Weakness and exhaustion of body may have had some, though probably but a slight, influence. The previous week had been one of great excitement and weariness ; vast multitudes had listened to his teachings ; even the Greeks, first fruits of the Gentiles, had sought an interview with him ; the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians had combined to entangle him in his talk, and all had completely failed ; more than once the officers of the temple had been sent out to arrest him, and had been prevented only by some sudden change of base, or by his eloquence, which disarmed them. The knowledge on his part of every step of Judas in betraying him had added to his cares and anxieties ; but none of these troubles could have so weighed down his spirits or whelmed him in such deep distress. The great cause of this fearful anguish was that he, the Sinless One, to whom all sin was so loathsome and hateful, was to satisfy the divine law by taking upon himself the burden of the sins of the whole world ; he, the guiltless and Holy One, was to bear the guilt and impurity of the sinners of all the ages. He was to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was to be upon him, and with his stripes we were to be healed. But under this terrible pressure it was not the divine nature that faltered ; that had from eternity determined on this plan of salvation, and had foreknown all its details ; it was the human body and the human soul which stretched its arms outward and upward for sympathy and comfort under this dreadful load, and found it at last in sweet submission to the divine will. Once more, and but for a moment, in the hours of torture which followed, did this "horror of great darkness" fall upon the dying



Redeemer; it was while he was on the cross, when he uttered that bitter cry, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But the everlasting arms were again around him, and the racked and tortured body rested in the embrace of death.

But we, too, in this discussion of the causes of his terrible agony, have left the Saviour as the betrayer approached him. Judas now drew nigh, at the head of a rabble composed of the officers of the temple, the night watch, a small party of Roman soldiers, and such servants and hangers-on of the high priest as could be conveniently assembled. The Roman soldiers and perhaps the officers of the temple wore swords; the rest of the party were armed with sticks or cudgels. Judas, with an infamous hypocrisy, had proposed that in order that the officers might be able to recognize Jesus he would go up to him boldly and kiss him. Accordingly, as soon as they were come to the garden the traitor hurried forward, and exclaiming, "Peace be to thee, Rabbi" (the true translation of the "Hail, Master," in the text), kissed him. Jesus replied with perfect dignity, "Comrade [not "friend," as our version has it, but an entirely different word], for what art thou come?" The other evangelists give a few

items which Matthew has omitted. After this treacherous kiss, Jesus stood before the multitude, and asked, "Whom seek ye? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth." "Jesus answered, I am he"; and such was the dignity and power which accompanied the answer that the crowd, awestruck, retreated, and many of them fell to the ground. When they had recovered themselves he again put the question. "Whom seek ye?" and again they answered, with bated breath, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus, ever thoughtful of others, and especially tender of his disciples, said, "I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these (my disciples) go their way." As the Roman soldiers advanced to seize him, Peter, as recklessly and imprudently brave as ever, drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of



OFFERING SALUTATION IN THE EAST.

the high priest. Jesus instantly commanded him to put up his sword into its sheath, and apologizing to the soldiers for the rashness of his follower, touched and healed the wound. While they were binding him Jesus remonstrated with the multitude, saying, "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness." When the Roman soldiers had bound his hands behind his back, and moved forward with their prisoner to the high priest's palace, all the disciples fled, under the apprehension that they too would be arrested; but John and Peter, loth to leave their Lord, followed on at a safe distance, and John first, and Peter later, entered the palace hall; Peter sitting with the servants to see the end.

In the meantime the priests and elders tried to obtain some witnesses to testify that Christ had said something in their hearing that was very wicked, and according to their law deserved death. Now, none could say this in truth; so they were obliged to get false witnesses; that is, pay some bad men to say anything they wished, to justify them in pronouncing sentence on him. These vile men then declared that they had heard Christ say that he could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Christ had, indeed, said to the chief priests, more than three years before, when he had driven the traffickers and money-changers out of the temple and they asked him for a sign of his authority, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"; but this saying of his had reference to his own body, the temple which enshrined the living God, as the temple at Jerusalem was supposed to enshrine the divine Shechinah; and he had not said that he could destroy that temple. But it was evident, even to them, that this testimony was worthless; so the high priest tried if he could get Christ to say something that would suit their purpose better, and adjured him to tell them whether or not he was "the Son of God." "Thou hast said," said Jesus,—that is, thou art right,—"I am the Son of God." Then the high priest rent his clothes, declared he had spoken blasphemy, and that there was no further need of witnesses. Had he not been the Son of God he would, indeed, have spoken

blasphemy, but they would not believe that he was so, though he had done miracles enough in the land to prove it, and therefore they now seized the opportunity of putting to death the Lord of Life and Glory.

And now the servants and soldiers spit in his face, struck him, slapped his cheeks, and, having blindfolded him, asked him to tell them who did it. This was horribly wicked: and they are as horribly wicked who make sport with the name of Jesus and use it triflingly or in jest. Take care never to sport with sacred things.

Peter was all this while sitting among the servants of the high priest, when one of the maids espied him out, and accused him of being a disciple; but Peter was afraid of suffering in the same way, and so denied it. He then left his seat and went to the porch or entrance of the high priest's hall; but there he was again discovered by another maid, and then he swore that he knew nothing of Christ. After this some more persons charged him with being one of Christ's followers, and they said that his dialect proved he came from the same part of the country. Peter again cursed and swore, probably worse than before, and said he knew nothing of Christ. Those that curse and swear show most plainly that they can not belong to Christ, so Peter took a most effectual and wicked method to disguise himself.

Jesus had warned him of this, and told him that before the cock should crow twice he would deny him thrice. His words now came to pass; the cock crowed—Peter remembered it—his heart was ready to break—he thought how wicked he had been, and, going away, he “wept bitterly.” This was a sign that he sincerely repented; but no weeping bitterly can ever wash away the foulness of your sins and of mine; *that* can only be done by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, which alone can bring healing to the wounded soul and take away its guilt and defilement, and which “cleanseth from all sin.”

### The Sufferings of Christ.—His Death.

#### MATTHEW XXVII.

We left Christ in the hands of the chief priests and elders, condemned to die; but they had not full power to kill him—they could



only show how much they desired to put him to death. About two years before this the Romans, who had conquered the Jews, had taken from them the power to execute any, and therefore another council was held to know what further to do. So they bound Jesus and led him to Pilate, the Roman governor who was placed over them, in order that he might execute the sentence which they had passed upon him.

While this was doing Judas' conscience became so troubled for having basely delivered up his innocent Master that he went and threw down the money which, for his wicked act, he had received from the chief priests and elders, and he said, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." But the priests, even more hardened than he, said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." As much as to say, that is your concern, Judas, and not ours; our end is served, and so you may do as you please; and if you have betrayed the innocent, the fault is yours, and not ours.

Christ having declared himself to be the Christ or Messiah,—the Son of God,—the Jews thought they had excellent grounds on which to accuse him to the Romans. They had a notion in their heads that the Messiah was to be their king, as David and others had been before; and so they thought that by Christ owning himself to be the Messiah he professed also to be their king. This was their own fancy, for his kingdom was not of this world, but spiritual; he never intended to sit upon an earthly throne, but to reign in the human heart, making it obedient to him from love. This fancy of theirs they told to Pilate as truth; and as the Romans would be jealous of any one claiming the throne—as Herod was when Christ was born—they thought they could bring a charge of treason against Christ. Pilate being informed of this asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou sayest"; meaning, "I am." He explained, as John tells us, to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world, and Pilate understood it. To the other false charges of the Jews he would make no reply.

Now, there had been a custom introduced by the Romans—perhaps to win the hearts of the lower orders of the Jews—to release some prisoner at the time of the passover. So Pilate fixed upon Barabbas,

a most notorious thief and murderer, and proposed to the Jews to determine which of the two should be set at liberty, Barabbas or Christ. He believed Christ to be innocent, and proposed this Barabbas, whose life none could well wish to be spared, that the innocent Saviour, whom he set in contrast to him, might escape. But the chief priests and elders managed to persuade the people to demand Barabbas. Astonished at their choice, Pilate then asked what was to be done with Jesus, and they said, "Let him be crucified!"

Crucifixion was a cruel, lingering, and disgraceful punishment. Cruel, for the criminal had to bear his cross to the place of execution, and then, faint and weary and heartbroken, he was stretched upon the wood, which was something like the letter T. On the top part his arms were extended and his hands nailed to the wood; and on the upright part his body was to hang, supported by his nailed hands, and, being at full length, his feet were nailed to the lower part. The cross was then lifted up, and with a jerk it was thrust into a hole in the ground, thus adding to the poor victim's sufferings. The criminal sometimes lingered a long time before he expired, and was killed at last. This mode of putting to death was only practised on wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and murderers, and the vilest of men; and it showed, indeed, the bitter and horrid malice of the wicked Jews against the innocent Saviour that they wished him to suffer no less a punishment; and they thought that this would frighten all his followers, as well as make them ashamed of him.

Pilate was shocked at the Jews, yet he had not courage nor uprightness enough to refuse them their wicked request; so, to quiet his own conscience in giving up the innocent Saviour to be put to death, he took some water and washed his hands before all the people, which was a custom to show that a man took no part in the murder of any person; and he said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." Then answered all the people and said, "His blood be on us and on our children"; that is, "we will bear the blame, whatever may happen from it, so let him die; we care nothing for the consequences, we are not afraid of them."

Oh, miserable people! His blood was afterwards upon them indeed!



Nearly their whole nation were butchered, enslaved, driven into perpetual banishment, and scattered among all nations, as they are to this day; and the Romans, whom they used as the tools to do their wicked deed, were the men that afterwards executed the Divine vengeance. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Jesus was scourged, stripped, dressed in mockery in a scarlet robe, like a pretended king; a crown of thorns was made and put upon his

head, that his tender temples might be pierced and made to bleed; and a reed, or cane, was put in his hand as a sham scepter. All of this the Saviour submitted to with the greatest meekness. Then, to finish their mockery, the Jews bowed their knee to him, and cried, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Now they spit upon him out of contempt, and smote him on the head with the reed, and finally took off his mock robes and led him away to be crucified.

On their way to the place of execution they met with a man of Cyrene, named Simon, thought by some to

have been attached to Christ; and as they feared that our blessed Lord could hardly live to be crucified, having suffered so much, they made Simon carry the cross.

At length they came to a spot called Golgotha, and there "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof he would not drink." Compassionate people usually mixed a drink to cheer the spirits of the victims going to execution, and to



CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.



stupefy their griefs; but none offered to soothe the blessed Jesus. Vinegar would have quenched his thirst, but gall mixed with it was nauseous indeed!

And now he was stripped naked, and his garments were parted by lot among the soldiers who were engaged in his execution; and, being crucified, the soldiers sat down to watch him, lest his disciples should take him.

It was usual to write the offender's accusation, and to have it affixed to the cross. Pilate wrote that of Christ: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Two thieves were crucified with him, at the same time and place.

As the cross was placed by the roadside, the mob from Jerusalem that passed by it wagged their heads in derision at Jesus, and reviled or blasphemed him, and told him that if he was the Son of God he ought to show it by coming down from the cross! He was, indeed, soon to show that he was the Son of God, but it would be in another way, after their malice was satisfied, by rising from his tomb. The chief priests and scribes also united in mocking him, and said if he would come down from the cross they would believe him. These priests and scribes knew that he had wrought wonderful miracles, yet they would not believe him; and now they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and must bear their guilt. One of the crucified thieves also mocked him.

At noon-day—called by the Jews "the sixth hour"—there came on a darkness, which lasted for three hours, and spread over all the land. And at the ninth hour, or "three o'clock in the afternoon," Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and so his human nature sank upon the cross. Some thought that he cried out from being so thirsty, and handed him some vinegar in a sponge put upon a reed; and now Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost, or yielded up his spirit.

Oh, what were his sufferings! His bodily sufferings were indeed great, but these were nothing compared with those of his soul. For God to forsake him at that moment, how awful! But why did God forsake him? God hates sin. The innocent Jesus then bore our sins.

This was the reason why he yielded to death. The Jews were wicked in killing him, and did it all of their own accord and out of the malice of their own hearts; but they could not have killed Christ if he had not willingly given himself to their malice and cruelty. And this that in his death he might bear the sins of all his people, for he himself was innocent, and it was these sins that caused God to withhold his comforts from him. Well may we adore the blessed Jesus for such a display of love. But, if he cried out beneath the weight of man's guilt, what must those sinners endure who will not believe in him and be saved, and so doom themselves to bear the weight of their own guilt forever?

But besides the great darkness, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, the earth quaked, and even the rocks were split asunder. The thick tapestry veil was rent, as a sign that all that was sacred in the ceremonies of the law was now over, and those ceremonies of no use; for the great Saviour and sacrifice was now come, and he had finished his work for guilty men. The earth quaked, perhaps as a sign of the dreadful shaking which was soon to befall the whole Jewish nation; and



INTERIOR OF A ROCK SEPULCHRE.

the rocks were split asunder to shame the hearts of the people, more hardened than those rocks.

These things convinced the soldiers who watched Jesus and the centurion who commanded them that he was no common person; and they were struck with fear, and said, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Many women also, who followed him from Galilee, were witnesses of his crucifixion; among whom "was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."

On the evening of this day, when the Jewish Sabbath was about to begin, the body of Jesus was obliged to be removed; and Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and secretly attached to Christ, went to Pilate



THE CHILD'S PRAYER





**ANGELS PROCLAIMING THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**

"The angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for I bring you good tidings of great joy.'"—Luke ii, 10.

and begged his body, which could not be taken down and buried without permission being given by the Roman governor. Leave being granted, "he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock"—for the sepulchres of the Jews were made in rocks; "and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."

The day following, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, and, fearing lest the disciples should steal the body of Christ and say it was risen, they begged that they might have the tomb guarded. So they made all as sure as they could, and sealed the stone that nobody might remove it, and set a watch or guard of soldiers to prevent any one approaching. This was one of the happiest events that could have taken place, because it furnished in the end the surest proofs that Jesus was not stolen away, but that he arose from the grave.

## The Resurrection of Christ.

### MATTHEW XXVIII.

It is reckoned that Christ lay in the tomb thirty-six or thirty-eight hours. At the dawn of day, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, went to the sepulchre, still desiring to see the dear remains of their beloved Lord. "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." These keepers were Roman soldiers, the most courageous men in the world; but they were frightened at the scene. If the resurrection of Christ was so awful, what must his coming to Judgment be! How will the guilty quake then!

When the women approached the sepulchre the Angel spoke kindly to them, and told them that the Lord was risen, and desired them to tell the glad news to the disciples, who were greatly discouraged at his crucifixion and death, and they were to assure them he would soon meet them in Galilee.

The women ran with all speed to tell the disciples, but on their way Jesus himself met and saluted them; and they fell at his feet, and held them, and worshiped him: and he repeated the orders to go into Galilee.

But what did the Roman soldiers do? They were set to guard the body of Jesus, and yet he had escaped. How could they escape punishment for this? They went into the city and told the simple story how it happened, and how terrified they were. "They showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done"; how that there had been a very great earthquake, and a very surprising appearance; for one like a young man descended from the clouds, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, which filled them with astonishment and dread; that he rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and then sat upon it; and that some women coming to the sepulchre were shown by him where the body had been laid, but was now gone; and how that after they had recovered themselves from the fright they had themselves examined the sepulchre, and the body was certainly gone; and sure they were that the women did not carry it away, nor any others; all which they thought proper to relate to the chief priests; partly on their own account, to clear themselves from the charge of bribery, corruption, sloth, and negligence; and partly that the chief priests might consider what further was best to be done.

Now, it would not do to bring the guards to trial for letting Jesus escape, for they would have defended themselves by telling the truth, and only have spread the account of the resurrection more abroad. So it was settled that a story should be made up that the disciples came by night and stole the body away while the guards slept; and the elders gave the soldiers a large reward to keep the resurrection secret. But this story, after all, was a very poor one; for it was not very likely that the timid disciples, who all forsook Christ and fled, would have stolen his body from the Roman soldiers; nor that all the guards would have been asleep; and even if they had, it was more than probable that some would have roused up, and the disciples would then have endured their vengeance. And then it was very



strange that the Roman soldiers should have been saved from punishment after they had slept upon their watch, which by their laws was deemed a heavy crime; but it was settled that the Jewish elders should explain the matter to the Roman governor if the affair came under his notice, and that so the soldiers should not be injured. The bungling nature of the story shows that the soldiers told a lie, and that they could not prevent the resurrection of our blessed Saviour, though they were even set to watch his tomb. Either they were asleep or awake: If awake, why should they suffer the body to be taken away? If asleep, how could they know that the disciples took it away? How could they, then, state that it was stolen? Then, again, the evidence of the apostles furnishes us with arguments of the clearest and most powerful kind: (1) They were poor, uninfluential, and timorous creatures; (2) the number of them forbids collusion, for the witnesses to the resurrection were very many; (3) the facts they avow were apparent to their own eyes; (4) the concurrence of all their testimony; (5) they gave their evidence before Jews, heathens, philosophers, rabbins, courtiers, and lawyers; (6) they bore evidence right at Jerusalem, in the synagogues and the prætorium; (7) their evidence was just at the time of the occurrence, when everything was being investigated, or seemingly so, by those in authority; and (8) the motives prompting the testimony must have been for truth's sake, for all knew that in so testifying they were exposed to the enmity and persecution of the Jewish authorities.



MOURNERS.

The story, reported by the Jews even to this day, is a delightful encouragement to our belief that Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the third day; but not the only proof we possess, for the eleven disciples went into Galilee, and there he met them after his resurrection, and he commanded them to go and preach the gospel to every creature; to tell men the glad tidings, or good news, that he had died to

save sinners, and that whosoever believed in him should never perish; and that he had risen again, and was therefore an ever-living Saviour, to whom all sinners might look for salvation to the end of time. When any professed sincerely to believe their message, they were to baptize them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—*i. e.*, in the name of the blessed Trinity; and this was to show that in like manner the Holy Spirit would purify their hearts who truly believed in him, and was to be a bold avowal before the world that they were the followers of Him who was crucified. As a further proof that those baptized were his followers, they were to do all his holy commands, and then all of them might expect his blessing and favor, “even unto the end of the world. Amen.”



# GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

**OR** written by Mark, under the direction of the Apostle Peter, through whose ministry, doubtless, Mark was converted. That this Gospel received the sanction of Peter, and was received into the Christian Church upon his authority, is conceded. St. John had seen it, with the other two Gospels, and wrote his own as supplementary to them. Papias speaks of the writings of Matthew and Mark as existing at the beginning of the second century, when he talked with the disciples of the Apostle. This, with the other Gospels, was known to Justin Martyr in the second century, when it was read in all the churches; and during the latter part of the first and the former part of the second century, the apostolic authors, Clemens, Hermes, Barnabas, and Ignatius, made use of it, as also of the other Gospels. But we need not add to these statements the list of evidence showing that this Gospel, though not written by an Apostle,—as in the case of Luke's Gospel,—was received as authentic, was divinely inspired, and was indorsed as such by the Apostles themselves; this latter fact inducing the early church to receive it at once into the canonical books. It carries with it the stamp of the Holy Spirit, and stands before the mind of man as a monument with foundations deeper and summit higher than any human conception. It is remarkable for its simplicity and clearness, and is usually regarded as a model record of facts. It is divided into sixteen chapters, and furnishes most of the things given in Matthew, adding thereto some further particulars.

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ARK is shorter than Matthew. It is a repetition of the same history by another hand, with here and there some few facts not mentioned by Matthew. Some of these, therefore, are all that need be added in this place.

In the *fourth* chapter we have the Parable of the Seed, which appears to have been delivered at the same time that the Parable of the Sower was, as we have read in Matthew, but was not mentioned by him with that parable. Thus, that nothing important might be lost, one Evangelist has supplied what another has omitted, as well as confirmed the truth

of all that the other has said.

The parable given by Mark is contained in the verses between the twenty-fifth and the thirtieth, of the fourth chapter.

In the *seventh* chapter Mark gives us the particulars of Christ's curing a deaf man: "And he put his fingers in his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Be opened," and his deafness was cured, and "he



spake plain." Most likely he might have once had his hearing, and had learned to speak a little, but having lost his hearing early in life, he could learn no more; but now with his hearing he learns also to speak. This kind action of Christ made the people look upon him with admiration, and they said, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

In the eighth chapter is related the cure of a blind man at Bethsaida, on whose eyes he spat, and he put his hand upon them. And the man directly saw men as trees walking: he could not exactly make out their shape from a tree. He put his hands on his eyes a second time, and then he saw clearly: teaching us, perhaps, to persevere in the use of proper means. But both in this case and in that of the deaf man the means were only signs; they could never have cured the man if administered by a common physician; these were miracles—things not of a common kind, and showed that he who performed them could only be the Son of God.

In the last chapter we have some further particulars about Christ's resurrection, and his encouragement to his disciples to preach his gospel and work miracles in his name, which would prove that their message was divine, and establish the truth of it at its beginning, before all the world. They were to cast out devils, who then possessed the bodies of men, just as Jesus had cast them out; they had to speak new languages which they had never learnt, so as to be able to tell men of every country about the way of salvation through Jesus Christ; they were to take up serpents without being bitten or endangered by them; if any attempt should be made to poison them, the deadly potion, which would kill other persons, should do them no harm; and if sick persons were brought to them to be cured, they should only lay their hands upon them and they would recover. You must, however, remember that there was this great distinction between the miracles performed by Jesus and those performed by his disciples,—that Jesus did all his by his own power, and without using any other name; but the power which the disciples had was not their own, but only what he gave them, and they were to work miracles only in his name. These miracles are not now needed, because we have so

many proofs left us that they were done by the first ministers, and the religion of Jesus is everywhere spread and spreading without them.

Mark further informs us more than Matthew, as he not only mentions Christ's command to his disciples, but the effect of their obeying it, and preaching the gospel to every creature; for "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Amen.\*

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\*As the observance of the Christian Sabbath—the first day of the week—instead of the Jewish Sabbath—the seventh day, or Saturday—commenced soon after the ascension of Christ, it may be as well to explain the reason of the change here. The setting apart of one day in seven for the worship of God is older than the Hebrew nation or the Jewish religion. It dates from the creation of man; and at first was, unquestionably, the seventh day, as that was the day of the completion of the creative work. All nations which are wholly or partially civilized adhere to this practice, which is founded in nature as well as in revelation; but in the lapse of time they have selected different days; so that almost every day of the week is the Sabbath of some nation. The Jews adhered to the seventh day; but the early Christians, and especially the Gentile Christians, felt that they should rather observe the first day of the week (our Sunday), since our Lord rose from the grave on that day, and his resurrection was a cardinal point in their faith. Some of the Jewish Christians, in the apostles' time, observed both days; but it was not easy to do this, and very early the Christians were distinguished from the Jews as those who observed the first day of the week for religious worship. God requires one-seventh of our time for his service, and that day is best for it which commemorates the resurrection, and is most generally observed.

# GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

OR. written by Luke, the companion of Paul during his most active labors and severe sufferings. It was extant at a very early period, and was received as of divine authority by the infant church from the time of its publication. Some uncertainty hangs about Luke's early history and his position among the followers of Christ. The sanction of the Apostle Paul, and the early and unanimous reception of the Gospel of Luke as divinely inspired, and its insertion into the Scripture canon, are alone sufficient proof of its heavenly origin. It furnishes many parables, discourses, miracles, and events omitted by the Gospels preceding it, whilst some already recorded are omitted. The style of Luke is distinguished from that of other New Testament penmen by its pureness and classical finish, aside from its occasional use of Hebrew and Syriac idioms. It is divided into twenty-four chapters, evidently written for the instruction of Gentile Christians.

## The Birth of John the Baptist.

### LUKE I.



LUKE is thought to have been the same mentioned by the Apostle Paul in the last chapter of his epistle to the Colossians, where he speaks of "Luke, the beloved physician."

This Evangelist tells us some particulars about the birth of John the Baptist which are not mentioned by the other three—that his father was a priest of the name of Zacharias; that his mother's name was Elizabeth, and that she was sprung from the race of Aaron; that they were both very good people, and walked together in the holy ways of God; and that John the Baptist was born when they were "well stricken in years," or quite old.

This remarkable forerunner of Christ was born, like him whom he was to honor and proclaim, in a very honorable and wonderful way. John's father, Zacharias, was burning incense in the temple, while the people "were praying without," when an angel appeared to him and told him that his son should be born, and that he must call him John—a name which means *the grace and favor of God*; and this was to show that God's grace would be upon him in a very striking manner.





**CHRIST APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS**

*"They saw a fire of scales there, and fish laid thereon, and bread."—John xxi, 9.*



**CHRIST AND PETER ON THE SEA**

"Beginning to sink, he cried, saying, 'Lord, save me.'"—Matt. xiv, 30.

He was to be separated from the world, like the ancient Nazarites (Numbers vi, 3), to drink "neither wine nor strong drink"; and God would bless his preaching, so that he should turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He should have the same holiness, courage, and zeal as Elias, or Elijah, to turn the disobedient into the ways of wisdom. Zacharias, though a good man, doubted the truth of what the angel told him, and asked for some sign from which he might have better reason to believe that what he said would come to pass. The angel told him he should be dumb till the child was born, and this should be a sign, and, at the same time, a reproof for his doubting the message which God had sent.

The people wondered that Zacharias should remain so long in the temple, and when he came out he had lost his speech, as the angel had said. Elizabeth, his wife, at length had a son; and when he was to be circumcised at eight days old, he had his name given to him. It was usual to name the son after the father, and the friends and relatives present would have had him called Zacharias, but Elizabeth having been informed in writing by her husband of all that had taken place, in obedience to the command of the angel would have him called John. The friends, however, asked the father what he would have him called; and he by signs asked for a writing-tablet, or little table made of brass, wood, or wax,—used in those days,—and wrote or scratched upon it, as they then did, with an iron pen, "His name is John. And they marvelled all."

No sooner had Zacharias obeyed the divine command than his tongue was unloosed, and he spake as before.

This event, which caused so great wonder among all present, was soon reported throughout the hill country of Judea, where they dwelt; and all that feared God were filled with awe at this extraordinary child, and anxiously waited to see for what purpose he had been sent into the world.

His father, Zacharias, was then "filled with the Holy Ghost," or the Holy Spirit inspired him to prophesy about the coming of Christ. And John grew up, but loved retirement, and went into desert and lonely places, no doubt God holding sweet communion with his spirit,



or talking, as it were, with his holy mind ; and so he remained till he came to proclaim Christ's coming, "preaching in the wilderness of Judea," as we have already seen in Matthew.

## The Birth and Early Days of Jesus Christ.

### LUKE II.

About the same time that John the Baptist was born Jesus was born also ; John was born not more than six months before Christ. At this time Cæsar Augustus, who was the second Emperor of Rome, reigned over that empire, which had become so large from its conquests that it was called "all the world." Judea, you know, was then tributary to it, or paid taxes to the Roman government. But a particular sort of tax was now determined on by the Emperor, which is called a poll-tax, or tax upon the head of every person ; and to make sure of all the subjects in the empire they were obliged to attend in person at an appointed place, and be enrolled, or entered in a book.

It is a remarkable fact that the Emperor had resolved on this tax twenty-seven years before ; but disturbances in the empire distracted his attention, and it was only now, when all the world was at peace, that he had time to attend to it. See here how Providence overrules all things ! Had he been able to carry his purpose into effect before, then the mother of Jesus would not have been there with her husband Joseph, and Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem, but at Nazareth, where he was afterwards brought up. But if he had been born at Nazareth instead of Bethlehem, then the prophecy respecting him would not have been fulfilled, as recorded in the fifth chapter of Micah and the second verse, and the fact that he was the true Messiah would have so far been doubtful. But here the ambitious views of a Roman Emperor to fill his coffers with money were made to bring about the fulfilment of God's promise to his church, by bringing the parents of Jesus to Bethlehem, the place prophesied of, where he was born.

At this time one Cyrenius was governor of Syria, which was an-

nexed to Judea, and he had the management of the tax. And every one went to his own city where he was born or the place where his inheritance lay; and as Joseph's family sprang from David's city, and, indeed, from David himself, though Joseph was now a poor man, he had to go up to Bethlehem.

The city was so crowded that there was no room for the infant Saviour and his mother in the place called by us the Inn, though rather a sort of lodging-place only. He was, therefore, born and lodged in a place for the accommodation of cattle.

Now, there were some shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem who were on the hills watching their flocks at night to preserve them from beasts of prey, when an angel appeared to them, surrounded with a bright glory, and told



SIMEON AND INFANT SAVIOUR.

them not to be afraid, for he came not to hurt them, but to tell them the glad news that the long-expected Saviour was born. And a multitude of other happy spirits joined the first messenger, and sang in the sweetest strains—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men"; that is, glory be to God in the highest heavens, and let all the happy spirits there praise him, for peace is now to dwell upon earth in Christ, the great peacemaker between

God and guilty men, and every kind of blessing will proceed from him.

And when the angels departed the shepherds went to Bethlehem and saw Jesus, as the messenger had exactly described him, "wrapped in swaddling clothes," or bound closely up, as was the custom in many countries about a hundred years ago, instead of infants having their limbs free, as they are now; and he was "lying in a manger." And they told every one they knew what wonderful things they had seen, and praised God for his great mercy in sending a Saviour into the world. Let us praise him, too.

After this Jesus was *circumcised*, and by this rite became a Jewish citizen, entitled to the covenant blessings promised to Abraham and his seed. Then he was *redeemed*, another custom of the Jews; for when God slew all the first-born of the Egyptians, he protected the Israelites, who, according to his command, given through Moses, had sprinkled the lintels and posts of their doors with the blood of the Passover lamb; and from that time he kept up the remembrance of this mercy by demanding the first-born to be consecrated to him; "for," said he, by Moses, "all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for myself." Instead of giving them up, however, to the service of the tabernacle,—which was consecrating them entirely to God, as the Levites were,—"the first-born of man might be redeemed for five shekels," or about two dollars and eighty cents of our money, which went to the service of the sanctuary. As no mention is, however, made here of the performance of this custom, it is supposed by some that "in case of poverty the priest was allowed to take less, or perhaps nothing." Our Lord's mother also *presented her offering*, a further custom usual on such an occasion. Had she been able she ought to have presented a lamb for a burnt-offering and a dove for a sin-offering; but as she was poor, and not able to purchase a lamb, she took two turtle-doves; for so the Lord had ordered by Moses: "If she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest



shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." This custom was to teach the Jews, and us also, that we ought to thank God for all our mercies, and that we should express our unworthiness of them by confessing our sins—we must present the sin-offering together with the burnt-offering.

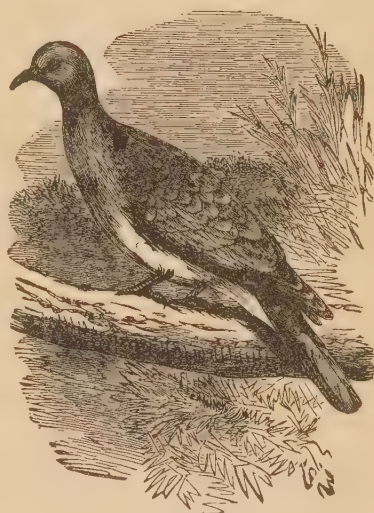
While the infant Jesus was in the temple there came in a good old man named Simeon, who had been anxiously waiting for the coming of the Messiah; and God having shown him by his Holy Spirit that the Saviour, whom his heart desired to see, had come, he took him up in his arms, and blessed God that he had lived to see him, and said he could now depart in peace, since he had seen God's salvation. "One Anna, a prophetess," who was eighty-four years of age, also entered the temple, and "gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of" Jesus "unto all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

Luke omits to tell us of the flight into Egypt; but that was told us fully in Matthew.

After these things Joseph and Mary, with the infant Saviour, "returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth."

And the child Jesus was brought up at Nazareth, under the care of his parents, and he "waxed," or grew, "strong in spirit," giving signs of a wonderful mind and of great piety, for "the grace of God was upon him."

When Jesus was twelve years old his parents went up to the temple to the feast of the Passover, in remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt, and he went with them. Probably this was his first Passover, and something now occurred which made the Evangelist Luke take notice of him at this age. For when the feast was over, and they returned with a number of other families that had gone for the same purpose, Jesus remained behind. His parents did not miss him till the end of the day; for, as he was amiable and beloved by all who



TURTLE-DOVE.

knew him, they supposed that he was among some of their friends and acquaintances on the road ; but not hearing anything of him, they became uneasy, and went back the next day to Jerusalem, and it was not till the third day that they found him. But where was he? Not in bad company, for he never stood in the way of sinners ; nor was he at play, for he was of an age to learn, and he was improving his time and getting knowledge from the doctors of the temple. The teachers of the law were used to instruct the young there, and they were allowed to ask any questions they pleased for the purpose of learning. Jesus had, therefore, placed himself at their feet, and was "both hearing them and asking them questions." "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

His parents wondered to find what he was about and to see how much he was approved. And his mother gently chided him for having given them so much alarm for his safety ; but he replied "Wist ye not," or know ye not, "that I was about my Father's business?" or, "in my Father's house?"

His mother remembered this and other sayings, and waited to see what more wonderful would happen as he should grow up to become a man.

So they returned to Nazareth, and there he lived, obedient to his parents and growing in favor "both with God and men"; his behavior, says the pious Dr. Doddridge, "being not only remarkably religious, but so benevolent and obliging as to gain the favor and affection of all that were about him."

You will observe that most of these interesting facts about the birth and early days of Jesus Christ are not mentioned by the Evangelists Matthew and Mark and are only given us by Luke.

### Christ Persecuted at Nazareth.

LUKE III, IV.

We shall now glance at some other matters mentioned by this Evangelist which have not been before noticed, and run through many chapters.

Luke tells us the exact time when John the Baptist made his first public appearance. It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea; and, as the dominions of Herod the Great had been divided after his death, *Herod Antipas*, one of his sons, *was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea*; or ruler of one-fourth of Herod's kingdom; *and his brother Philip* tetrarch of another fourth part, which was *the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis*—the name which was now given to the tract of land on the other side of Jordan, which had formerly belonged to the tribe of Manasseh; *and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene*, a province of Syria, whose territories extended to Lebanon and Damascus and had many Jewish inhabitants. At that time, also, *Annas and Caiaphas were high priests*; not that there were two high priests at one time, but Annas, who had been high priest several times, had so managed as to have five of his sons and one son-in-law (Caiaphas) appointed high priests when he was not in office himself; and he generally ruled when they were high priests in name.

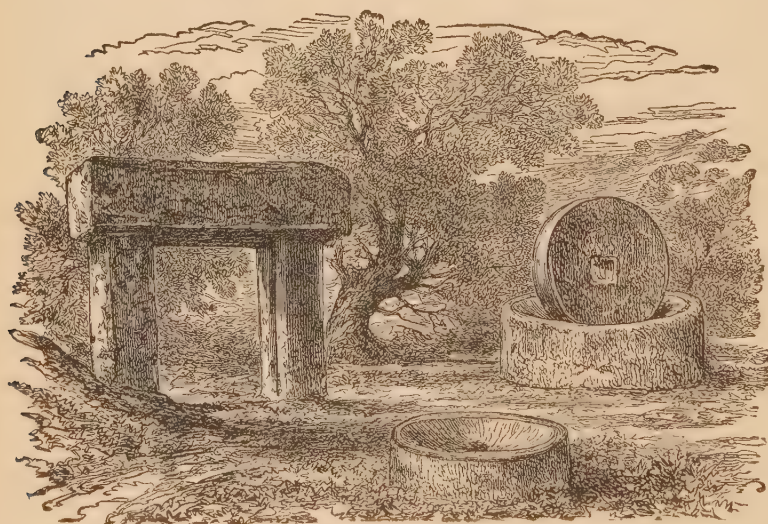
The third chapter contains a long list of names, like the first chapter of St. Matthew. They are, however, reversed in their order, and somewhat different, but both are designed to trace up the genealogy of Jesus Christ through its proper line; that is, to show who were his forefathers after the flesh. Matthew traces it forward from Abraham down to Joseph; and Luke traces it backward from Joseph, the son, by adoption, of Heli (who was the brother of Jacob, the real father of Joseph) to Adam. It is supposed that Heli was the elder brother, but had no sons, and so Jacob's son was called his, according to the Jewish law. There is a tradition that Mary was the daughter of Heli which may be true, but this genealogy does not state it.

John the Baptist having been thrown into prison by the wicked Herod, Jesus left Perea and went into Galilee.

There his fame had already spread, and he went from place to place, teaching in the synagogues, while every one admired him, and declared "they never heard such preaching in all their lives." "And he came to Nazareth," where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, "he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up for to



read," for this was a constant part of the Jewish worship. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias," or Isaiah; the former being the Greek and the latter the Hebrew for the prophet's name—just, for instance, as Louis Philippe was the French name for the king of the French, and Lewis Philip the English name for the same king. "And when he had opened the book," or unrolled the volume,—for the Hebrew Scriptures were written on long pieces of parchment, fastened at each end on sticks, and so rolled up,—he found the place where it was written as in the forty-first chapter of Isaiah, and the first, second, and third verses. Having read the pas-



OLIVE-PRESS.

sage, "closed the book," and rolled it up, he "sat down," as the Jews used to do, to preach, while "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him," being very curious to know what he was going to say about a text which they knew

described the Messiah. And he then discoursed upon the passage, and told them that the Scripture was that day fulfilled in their hearing.

His words were so full of grace, both in the precious truths which he uttered and in the way in which he uttered them, that all his hearers were exceedingly surprised; but yet they could not forget that he was the son of the humble Joseph, and had been brought up at Nazareth under his care, "and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

Jesus knew what they thought. And he said, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself." You have worked miracles abroad, now do so at home. "Whatsoever we have heard



JOSEPH AND MARY RESTING WHILE ON THEIR FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.



#### THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

“The angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, ‘Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.’” —Matt. 2, 13.



done in Capernaum, do also in thy country." And he said, "Verily, I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country"—which was another proverb, or common saying. By this he meant that his miracles would be thrown away upon them; for they would still think from whom he was descended and wonder at what he did, as they now wondered at what he said, but they would not believe in him as the true Messiah. In the days of Elias, or Elijah, though there were many widows living in Israel, he performed the miracle of multiplying the cruse of oil for a widow of Sarepta, a city of the Gentiles; and in the time of Eliseus, or Elisha, the prophet, though there were many lepers in Israel, he cured none but Naaman, who also was a Syrian and a heathen. So our blessed Saviour intimated he would do miracles for and in the presence of heathen rather than before them, for he knew they were so hardened that they would not believe in him.

This faithful address turned their admiration into rage, and, rising up in a tumultuous manner, without any reverence to the place or day, they violently cast him out of the synagogue, and out of the city, too, and brought him to the very brow of the mountain on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong and dash him to pieces. But Jesus, when he had permitted their madness to go thus far, confounded their sight in such a miraculous manner that he passed through the midst of them unknown, and went away to the neighboring city of Capernaum, where he abode for some time.

We have given you the latter part of this account in the words of Dr. Doddridge, because we think we can not possibly make it more plain.

### Christ's Miracle of the Draught of Fishes.—Christ Raises the Widow's Son.—The Penitent Woman.

#### LUKE V-IX.

While our Lord was at Capernaum we find him continually engaged in doing good, teaching in the synagogue, and instructing the people at all other opportunities. Where he went he was attended by crowds, and on one occasion they were so great that they

“pressed upon him to hear the word of God, as he stood by the lake of Gennesareth.” Seeing two fishing vessels near the shore he went into one of them, and, pushing off a little way from the shore, he there “sat down and taught the people out of the ship.”

The fishermen who owned the vessels had been very unsuccessful in their last night's labors, for they had toiled all the night and taken nothing. When Christ had done preaching, and feeding them with food for their souls, he now thought of their bodies also, and he desired them to launch out into the deep, and let down their nets for a draught of fishes. They had little hope of success, but, in obedience to Christ's word, they were disposed to try. The nets were let down, and they drew them up so full of fishes that one of them broke, and the fishes taken so overloaded both the vessels that they began to sink. All were astonished; and Simon Peter, who was one of the party, with his partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, fell down on his knees, and cried out, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord”—meaning that he was not worthy of the high honor of having Jesus on board his vessel and of continuing in his presence. Jesus encouraged the timid man, and told him that he would employ him in a far nobler work, and that henceforth he should catch men. And so it came to pass when—if we compare the gospel to a net—he caught 3000 souls at once by his preaching, as we shall read in the Acts of the Apostles. Matthew and Mark have given no more of what happened at this time than merely that Christ sat down in the ship and taught, so Luke has supplied what they omitted.

In the sixth chapter of Luke we find a beautiful discourse of our Lord's, something like that which we call the Beatitudes, in the beginning of Matthew. That, however, was delivered on a mount, and this on a plain; and on examining them and comparing them together, we find them differing very much, though parts of the former discourse were repeated in this, it being another assembly.

In the seventh chapter the Evangelist informs us of Christ's raising to life the son of the widow of Nain. He was just at the moment entering into that city, and a number of his disciples and followers were with him; and on approaching the gate he met a funeral proces-

sion. The dead person was a young man—the only son of a widow. The custom was not to inclose the body in a coffin, as with us, but to carry it on an open bier, borne on the shoulders, just merely covering the corpse with a cloth. The poor widow followed in great sorrow, weeping intensely over her great and overwhelming loss. And who could help her? She seems to have been much respected, and so was her son, by the large concourse that attended the funeral; but her friends and neighbors could only pity her. Jesus pitied her too, for he had a heart full of tenderness, as he has now; but he could do something more for her than mere mortals—he had power even over death; and so he said kindly to the widow, “Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother.”

In the same chapter we have also an account of a woman that had been a notorious sinner, who entered the house where Christ was dining with one of the Pharisees. He, as usual, was engaged in speaking the words of instruction, and she listened to him with the greatest attention. Every word touched her heart, and as his feet lay bare on the couch, according to custom, the tears fell in a shower from her eyes, and bathed them all over. She, perceiving this, wiped them with the tresses of her hair, which hung loose about her shoulders; and then, not thinking herself worthy to anoint his head, she kissed his feet, and poured upon them some liquid perfume. The Pharisee was surprised that a holy prophet, as Jesus professed to be, should allow a woman of such a class to approach him; and though he did not speak, Jesus knew what he thought. And he told him there were two debtors; and the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. As they were unable to pay, their creditor kindly forgave them. Now, he would ask the Pharisee, which of these was likely to love the kind creditor most? “Why,” said the Pharisee, “the one who had most forgiven him.” “Rightly said,” answered our Lord; “now thou hast not had the sense of pardon as this woman. My words touched her heart; she has sincerely repented; her many sins are forgiven her, and she therefore loves me much.”



Some think that this is the same woman that we read about in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew; but many who have carefully studied their Bible think otherwise, and for these reasons: the story told by Matthew happened in Bethany, this in Galilee; that in the house of Simon the leper, and this in the house of Simon the Pharisee; that was but two days before the death of Christ, and this a considerable time before; the ointment that woman poured was poured upon his head, and this upon his feet.

In the second verse of the eighth chapter we have mention made of "Mary called Magdalene," or Mary of Magdala, so called, just as Jesus was called Jesus of Nazareth; for Magdala was the place of residence of this Mary, as Nazareth was that of Jesus. Out of this woman our Lord cast seven evil spirits, which, I have before remarked, were suffered then in an extraordinary manner to torment the minds and bodies of men. Few persons can, without considerable reflection, form the slightest idea of the gratitude and love toward Christ that must have moved the poor afflicted creatures whose lives were converted from misery to a full degree of health and bodily comfort. Among them not the least favored by this "Physician of all physicians" was this Mary, who became a faithful follower of her Lord.

### **The Seventy Disciples sent forth.—The Inquiring Lawyer.—The Good Samaritan.—Martha and Mary.**

#### LUKE X.

In the tenth chapter we are told that, besides the twelve apostles whom Jesus chose to be witnesses to his truth and to declare it to the world, he also sent forth seventy disciples, who were to go in company with each other, two one way and two another way, and so with the whole.

And now he mentioned the awful state of Chorazin and Bethsaida—cities where he had preached and performed his glorious miracles, so that the inhabitants, if they had reflected, must have seen that he was the true Messiah, the Son of God, and have repented and believed his words. Instead of which they rejected him, in spite of all the







words he spoke and the mighty deeds he performed to prove that his message was divine—and so now they must perish. Tyre and Sidon were very wicked cities, but these were more wicked; for Tyre and Sidon had never heard nor seen such things as were made known to the people of Capernaum and Bethsaida.

Encouraged by their divine Lord, the disciples went forth; and, having gone on their circuit, they returned and told their Master of their great success, and that they had even cast out devils at the mention of his authority. He then told them that he saw Satan when he was, for rebellion,

cast out of heaven quick as lightning, and he still foresaw that his power on earth should be destroyed. They should trample on venomous creatures and receive no hurt; but much more should the preaching of his word break down the power which



MOUNTAINS ABOUT JERICO.

evil spirits might have over the minds of men. Yet they were not to glory in being able to perform miracles, for they could do nothing without his aid and might; but they ought indeed to glory when he told them that their names were "written in heaven"; and that as citizens were often enrolled, or their names written in the books of cities where they dwelt, so they were considered by him as the citizens of that happy place, as much as if such a book of their names were actually kept there.

While our Lord was talking to the seventy disciples, a lawyer—or

one of the writers and expounders of the Jewish law—came to him and said, “Master,” or Teacher, “what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Our Lord asked him what he read in his own law. And he said he found there that he was to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. “Do this,” said Jesus, “and thou shalt live.” This is the grand proof of our religion: if we truly love God and endeavor to do the best sort of good to our neighbors. The lawyer next inquired, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus told him in the interesting *parable of the Good Samaritan*.

This parable begins at the thirtieth verse of this tenth chapter. I must merely tell you that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was, and still is, very dreary, and has always been a lurking-place for robbers, so that it was called the “bloody way”; that priests and Levites often traveled that road, for some thousands of them lived at Jericho, and they had frequent occasion to go to Jerusalem; that the Jews and Samaritans hated each other greatly, and so the kindness of the good Samaritan in relieving a poor injured Jew, while even his own priest and Levite cruelly passed him by, was so much the more to be admired; and that the two pence mentioned by our Lord mean Roman pence, which were worth about seventeen cents each. We will end all we shall say about this parable by the words of our divine Lord to the lawyer; and when you meet with an enemy in distress, do not be revenged upon him, but “go and do likewise.”

This chapter closes with an account of a visit which Jesus paid to Martha and Mary, two pious sisters who lived at Bethany, a village about two miles from Jerusalem.

May my young readers all have grace to choose Mary’s good part, and, like her, by faith sit at Jesus’ feet and hear his word!

**Jesus teaches his Disciples to pray.—The Parable of the Rich Fool.  
—The waiting Servants.**

LUKE XI, XII.

Our blessed Saviour often retired to pray; and he taught his disciples to pray what we call the Lord’s Prayer, which is repeated here

and which we have before seen in the sixth chapter of Matthew. In this, however, are not mentioned all the things we may ask; for we find many other prayers, or parts of prayers, in Scripture, as David's, and Solomon's, and Daniel's, and those contained in the epistles, especially of the apostle Paul.

And here he particularly reminds his disciples that when they pray they must be in earnest. And he tells them that if any of them happened to be out of bread, and a friend should come to see him late in the evening, and he should be obliged to borrow some, as the Jews used to do of each other, it might happen that the house would be shut up at which he might knock. But, then, what will he do? Will he go away? No, he will knock and knock again.

By this our blessed Lord would teach his disciples, and us also, that we must not pray in a hurry, but keep on knocking at the door of mercy, and earnestly ask, as if we wanted indeed to have; and if the man's friend was obliged to give him bread on account of his pressing him so much, then much more would our gracious Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him.

In the twelfth chapter Luke relates *the parable of the Rich Fool*, as we call it. I should like you to read it from the sixteenth to the twenty-first verse. Our Lord describes in it a rich man, who had large barns, full of what his lands had produced, and so much stock that he did not know where to put it. So he resolved to build new barns in the room of the old ones, and to make them larger. And then he thought, "How happy I shall be! I have many years yet to live, and my soul and body may be both at ease: so I will eat, drink, and be merry." But he never thought of thanking God for his wealth or laying any of it out for his glory. So just as he fancied he had got all things to his mind, God sent death to him, and spake to his conscience by his Providence: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" How important is gratitude to God!

In the thirty-fifth verse our Lord says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding." Among the Jews weddings took place at night. The servants, therefore, would



have to sit up for their masters, and must keep their lamps trimmed ready to light them. If the lamps went out it would be a sign of negligence, or that, instead of watching, they were asleep. The garments being long, like a morning gown, it was also usual to tuck them up and gird them close round the waist if anything needed to be quickly done. By mentioning these customs our Lord would show the disciples and us that, as his servants, we should always be ready to meet him at his coming. Death, at his command, will take away all that we have; but as one would watch a thief expected to come at midnight, so ought we to be upon our watch, and then, when called to die, we shall not be taken by surprise. The faithful steward, who uses his time and talents for the divine glory, shall be richly rewarded; but he who presumes on his Lord's delaying, and does wicked things, must suffer the most dreadful consequences. As the faithless and disobedient servant was, by the Jewish people, scourged with stripes, so shall all such receive the sorest punishment, and that punishment shall be the greater for those who have been taught good things and choose to do those that are bad.

### The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.—Of the Highest Seat.—Of the Lost Piece of Money.—Of the Prodigal Son.

LUKE XIII—XXIV.

My limits now oblige me unavoidably to pass over many things in this gospel which I should be glad to explain to you; but there are many parables given by this evangelist which we do not find in the others, and as I wish particularly to explain them, I must beg you to place your Testament before you, and refer to and read them before you read my short remarks, which I hope, by God's blessing, will be some help to you in the right understanding of them.

The first is *the Barren Fig Tree* (Chap. xiii, 6–9).

*Explanation.*—The tree referred to by our Lord was a sort of white fig, which, if it did not bear fruit in three years, rarely bore any at all. This tree represented the unbelieving Jews, whom God had favored with great privileges, and sent his prophets and his Son among them



**CHRIST PREACHING BY THE SEA OF GALILEE**

"As the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God . . . he entered into one of the ships . . . and taught the people out of the ship."—*Luke v, 1-3.*



**CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG MAN**

"Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." —Matt. xix. 21.



to call them to repentance; but still they had not glorified him. Still, he had been patient with them, and had not punished them as they deserved, but all in vain. His kind care over them must therefore soon cease, and they be ruined like a tree cut down.

In the fourteenth chapter, from the seventh to the eleventh verses, we have the parable of *the Highest Seat*.

*Explanation.*—We have some ceremonies among us about taking a seat, but in the East the ceremonies are much greater. The Persians in particular, when invited to a feast, will wedge themselves in at the table just at the place where they suppose their rank entitles them to sit. The master of the feast may, however, raise any one as high up the table as he pleases. The Greeks have the same custom at their wedding feasts, and if any take places higher than they ought, they are very likely to be put lower down.

Our Lord here teaches us “that pride will have shame, and will at last have a fall.”

*The Prodigal Son* is a most delightful parable, from the eleventh verse to the end of the fifteenth chapter.

*Explanation.*—This parable represents to us the Jews under the character of the eldest son; they having long been treated as God’s children, while the Gentiles were not so; and how they felt themselves mortified when our blessed Lord gave them to understand that the Gentiles should be also blessed in the Christ, the true Messiah. It shows us, also, how the sinner, choosing his own way, goes afar from God, our common Father, and so from real happiness. And it points out the folly of those young persons who will break through every restraint and have their own way, which most frequently brings on



CAROB FRUIT (HUSKS OF PRODIGAL SON) AND LEAVES.

misery, and often ruin. It likewise teaches us at the greatest extreme of misery and wretchedness not to despair, but to go to a merciful God, who will look upon our tears, will hear our supplications, and will yet receive us graciously into his tender mercies, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The sixteenth chapter begins with *the Unjust Steward*, and it is contained in the first eight verses.

*Explanation.*—"This world," says one, "is a house; heaven, the roof; the stars, the lights; the earth, with its fruits, the table spread; the Master of the house is the holy and blessed God; man is the steward, into whose hands the goods of this house are delivered; if he behave himself well, he shall find favor in the eyes of his Lord; if not, he shall be turned out of his stewardship." We see in this parable that one step of sin leads on toward another, and that he who begins to cheat will soon easily go on cheating. Roguery is, however, sooner or later discovered, and then it ends in the disgrace of the offender. Yet bad as it is to act unjustly toward man, it is worse when we consider that we can not do wickedly toward others without breaking God's law. Such a steward must break the sacred command, "Thou shalt not steal"; and God marks those who wickedly break his righteous laws.

In the nineteenth and following verses we have the parable of *the Rich Man and Lazarus*.

*Explanation.*—The expression "Abraham's bosom," used here, was used among the Jews to express heaven. We must remember that this is only a parable, and that the happy in heaven and the wicked in hell are too far apart ever to talk with each other.

In the seventeenth chapter is a short parable which we call *the Servant in the Field*. It is to teach us that when we serve God ever so diligently we have only done our duty, and have merited nothing from his hands.

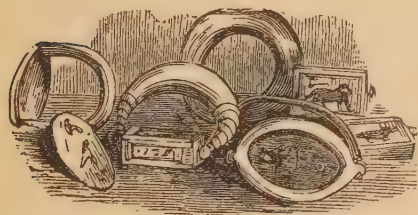
In the eleventh and following verses we read of *ten lepers* whom Christ cured, but out of the ten only *one* gave him glory for what he had done. Was not this ungrateful? But ask yourself, How many mercies have I received and have forgotten to praise God for them? "In everything give thanks," and bless the kind Giver.

The eighteenth chapter begins with the parable of *the Unjust Judge*, which, as the introduction of it tells us, is to teach us "that men ought always to pray and not to faint," for if the unjust judge could be wearied to do what the poor widow needed, surely God will not suffer those who love him to plead with him in vain.

The last parable that requires our notice in this book is that of *the Pharisee and the Publican*. It is included in the tenth and following verses. The Pharisee represents those who think there is merit in their performing their religious duties, and who hope to be saved by them; while the publican represents the humble-hearted sinner, who feels no pride in praying, but only feels his need of God's mercy.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

In this gospel there is an account given of Zaccheus, the publican, or tax-gatherer, who was very rich: and as Jesus was passing through Jericho, he wished much to see him. But he was a very short man, and could not see among the crowd, so he got up into a sycamore or kind of fig-tree. Jesus looked up and called him by name to come



ANCIENT SIGNET RINGS.



ANCIENT SIGNET RINGS.

down, for he meant to go with him to his house. Zaccheus was delighted at this, but many were mortified, and, no doubt, many of the Pharisees, for they said that Jesus was gone to be a guest with a sinner. Yes, Jesus Christ "came into the world to save sinners." And now the heart of Zaccheus was touched

by his grace. He had been an oppressive and unjust tax-gatherer, and had wronged those of whom he had collected, to enrich himself. But he was not ashamed to confess his sins, and to make recompense to those whom he had injured, and so to repent. Jesus saw that he was sincere. He knew, too, that his heart was ready to receive him as his Saviour. Zaccheus becoming blessed, would now be a blessing



to others. "This day," said Jesus, "is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham." Publicans, though Jews, were reckoned by them but as heathens; but now Zaccheus is blessed with faithful Abraham; like him, he would command his children and his household to walk in the ways of holy obedience. The salvation of Zaccheus was an example of Christ's design in coming into the world, "to seek and to save that which was lost."

In this gospel there are also several particulars concerning the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ which are not found in the other gospels. Among those relating to the crucifixion are: his praying for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; the petition of the dying thief, and his prompt pardon by the Saviour; the commending his spirit into the hands of his Father just before his death. In regard to the resurrection, we have two angels appearing to the women; Christ's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus; and to the eleven in Jerusalem. As to his ascension, Luke gives a more particular account of it, both here and in the first chapter of Acts, than any of the other Evangelists. He is also the only Evangelist who gives the command of Christ that **they** should remain in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit.

# GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

WRITTEN by John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the son of Zebedee, brother of James, and cousin of our Lord. His relations to the Saviour were more intimate even than those of his brother James and of Peter. He wrote this Gospel probably twenty years or more after the other Gospels were in circulation. His purpose in writing it seems to have been not to repeat the incidents of the birth and youth of Christ, which the other Evangelists had already given with sufficient fullness; nor to describe many of his miracles (he mentions only eight, six of which are not found in the other Gospels), or recount his parables, which had already been done; but to demonstrate to the disciples at Ephesus, and to the world, *that Jesus was the Son of God*. In doing this he necessarily supplies many particulars which his more intimate intercourse with Christ enabled him to know more fully than the other Evangelists, and he gives special prominence to those teachings of Christ in which his divine nature was asserted and demonstrated. As instances of this, his conversation with his earliest disciples, with Nicodemus, with the Samaritan woman, with the Jews after the miracle of healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, after the feeding of the five thousand, and on several other occasions at Jerusalem; at the raising of Lazarus, in the temple, and in his long and tender interview with his disciples the evening before his betrayal, may be adduced. It was incidental to this purpose that John gives a much fuller account of the Saviour's labors in Judea than the others, their narratives being mostly occupied with his life and labors in Galilee. His accounts of the trial, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ are, as was becoming in the principal eye-witness of all three, more full and definite than those of any of the other Evangelists; and this also aids his main purpose—to demonstrate that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This Gospel has always been accepted by the church as authentic and inspired; of late years infidels and rationalistic writers have attempted to show that it was written in the second or third century after Christ, and was not genuine; but they have signally failed. It is divided into twenty-one chapters. The last two verses of the twenty-first chapter are supposed to have been added by the elders of the church at Ephesus, at whose request the Gospel was written.

## Account of John the Evangelist.—John the Baptist's Testimony to Christ.

JOHN I.



HE Evangelist John was distinguished as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." Jesus loved all his disciples, but John was particularly honored by him, sat near him, and leaned upon his bosom. When Jesus shone in such glory on the "high mountain," John was one of the three disciples that saw him. He was, likewise, one of the three that saw his agony in the garden. To him also was committed the care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, when he died on the cross. History informs us that he lived till he was very old, and, while the other disciples were martyred, he was suffered to die a natural death.

As we find things in Mark and Luke which are not in Matthew, so we find things in John which are not in either of the other Evangelists.



“HE CAME TO NAZARETH, AND WAS SUBJECT UNTO THEM.”

John does not repeat the account of the birth of Jesus Christ, for that had been sufficiently done by the other three Evangelists; those who followed the first having told us about matters omitted by him, that nothing important might be wanting. And throughout this Evangelist the history of what Jesus did is not so much related as what he said.

In the other Evangelists we are told about the things which Jesus performed, from which we must conclude that he was more

than a mere man, for no man could do the miracles which he did; and there are also expressions used at different times which point out that he was a divine person. But John treats more



largely on this point, and begins his gospel by declaring that Jesus Christ is God.

Christ is here called "the Word." We will tell you why: because he it is that speaks all divine things to us; we know the word of God only through him.

He who is called "the Word" is also called God; "and the Word," says John, "was God."

He was in "the beginning"; in the beginning of time, and therefore he was from eternity, before time begun. The world was not "in the beginning," as eternity is called, but was from the beginning. The world can not have existed as this divine Word has existed, because—as is elsewhere said of him—"he was before all things, and by him all things consist."\* He must have been before the world, because he made the world; for John adds, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Now, we have seen in Genesis that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"; so that it is clear he who is here called "THE WORD" is the same that is there called "GOD."

John further says, "in him was life": all living beings derive their life from him, and nobody can give life but God. Men can make a fine statue, but all the men in the world can not give it life; God alone must do this. But in this divine "Word was life."

"And the Life was the Light of men." The world must have been in gross darkness without him. We could have known nothing about

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\* It has been well said that "while Matthew begins his genealogy of Christ with Abraham, and Luke traces it back to Adam, John goes back to 'the beginning,' before the creation of the earth or the universe. To him the creation of man seems to be a modern and recent occurrence. His genealogy dates from eternity." Our readers should also notice the similarity between the commencement of this gospel and that of the book of Genesis. The old revelation of God's will and the new both start from "the beginning" of all things; but while the Old Testament only brings us to the hill-tops, from whence we may see the first signs of the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness,—the coming of the light of the world,—the new bears us up, as on angels' wings, till we can see, from the walls of the Jerusalem above, the end of all earthly things, and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In the Scriptures, then, we have the whole history of God's dealings with man—past, present, and future; from that remote period far back of the ages of the geologist when the plan of salvation was first conceived in the mind of God, to that period in the future when the earth and heaven, that now are, shall pass away, and, the judgment being ended, the saints of all ages shall reign forever with their glorified Lord.

God and the way to heaven but through Jesus Christ. Where he is not known even the wisest men did and still do worship carved figures of different materials, believing them to be God.

This "light shined in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not." "The world by wisdom knew not God." When Jesus Christ appeared men could not see his glory; they were even so blind that the miracles which proved him to be no mere man could not convince them.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light—that all men through him might believe. He" [John] "was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The heathen have the light of reason, which God gave to them; and we have the light of revelation, or of the gospel, revealed—or made known to us—by his Holy Spirit.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us: and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Now, think a little on what John has here said. Though his language, being about uncommon matters, is expressed in a way not directly to be understood,—on account of our being so used chiefly to common concerns,—yet by a little thought it becomes very clear.

The Word—which spoke the mind of God, and was God; which made all things, and is the life and light of all men—was borne witness to by John the Baptist, who came preaching a few months before Jesus openly showed himself in his ministry; and that "Word" was the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who "was made flesh" when he took our nature and was born in Bethlehem; who "dwelt" some time in the world; whose "glory" the apostles saw—in the deeds he did, in the heavenly truths which he taught, in his transfiguration on the mount, and in his ascension to glory, of which we shall hereafter read.

John attracted much attention by his bold and singular way of preaching; and the Jews made inquiries of him if he was the Christ—the Messiah foretold by the prophets. John replied that he was not;

that he was only like the forerunner of a prince in his processions or travels, going before him and saying, "Make straight the way of the Lord," remove every impediment out of the way to receive him; or, as a king's servants say, "Make room." Men must turn out their sins by repenting of them, and so make room in their hearts for Jesus Christ. He, who was the Christ, was speedily coming to preach his gospel, and he was far greater than John; so much so that the latter was not worthy of being honored as his servant, to unloose even the straps of his sandals—or shoes without the upper leathers, as worn in the East.

The very next day Jesus made his appearance, and John pointed to him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me." But why did John call Jesus "the Lamb of God"? Because he came into the world to die for sinners. Every morning and evening the Jews offered up a lamb in sacrifice; which sacrifice in the morning took away the guilt of the night, while that of the night took away the guilt of the morning. So God appointed, and so the Jews sacrificed. But Jesus Christ was now to be the Lamb slain. What those lambs did only in type, or as a sign, he came to do in reality for all who by faith behold him as "the Lamb of God"—the only Lamb that can take away sin; or, in other words, the only sacrifice that can be truly effectual, and on whose account alone all the old sacrifices were of any use. The Jews would in vain have offered their lambs in sacrifice if Jesus Christ had not died; and the truly pious Jews believed this, and looked to something more that was to take place when the Messiah should finish his work.



SANDALS.

John, moreover, declared that he knew nothing of Christ any more than other people—there was no scheme between them that he should make out Christ to be the Messiah, for he declared him to be such



because he had seen the Holy Spirit rest upon him in some extraordinary appearance, resembling a meek and innocent dove, yet at the same time all glorious and divine. On this account he "bare record," or declared of Christ that he was "the Son of God."

John's disciples, on hearing this testimony, wisely left John, as John wished, and followed after Jesus, and were soon joined by other disciples, whom Jesus added to them to be witnesses of what he said and did.

After this Jesus soon gave his disciples a proof that they had not been mistaken in following him as the true Messiah. Nathanael was invited by Philip to come to Christ, and to follow him.

Nathanael went to Jesus, and when Jesus saw him approaching he said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" This was a proof that he was more than a mere man, or how should he have known anything about Nathanael, whom he had never before seen? By this he meant that Nathanael did not merely pretend to serve God as an Israelite, but that he served him from his heart. There was no guile or deceit about him, but he was truly sincere.

The good man was surprised at our Lord's knowledge, and asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus said, "When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee." This was probably some spot where Nathanael retired to meditate and to pray, and where he was so shut out from the world that he knew no eye could possibly see him but the eye of God.

Nathanael needed no further proof that Christ was the Messiah, and so he directly cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." That is, "My Master, thou art a divine person, thou art the Messiah, prophesied of to rule over Israel."

Many suppose Nathanael to have been the same disciple which is called Bartholomew; because Bartholomew being called to be a disciple is never mentioned, and so they think that Nathanael must have been the proper name of Bartholomew, for Bartholomew is not a proper name, but signifies the son of Ptolemy. The Evangelists who speak of Bartholomew never mention Nathanael; and John, who mentions Nathanael, never mentions Bartholomew; so that it is thought

the one name is mentioned for the other; and, lastly, John seems to rank Nathanael among the apostles, when he says that Peter, Thomas, the two sons of Zebedee, Nathanael, and two other disciples having gone a-fishing, Jesus showed himself to them. See the twenty-first chapter and the second verse.

### Marriage at Cana, in Galilee.

#### JOHN II.

We have here an account of the first of Christ's public miracles, which he performed at a marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, to which he and his disciples were invited, and his mother Mary was also there.

There being more guests than were probably at first expected, the wine was soon consumed. Mary mentioned this lack of wine to Jesus. Some think that Mary, having seen him perform some miracles in private, now expected to see him perform another by supplying the wine. And they suppose this because Mary could have no other reason for mentioning it to him than that he should take notice of it, and because he checked her for intimating it to him, probably to induce him to work a miracle. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour"—that is, my time for working any miracle here—"is not yet come." I wish you just to observe, by the way, that this language seems rather rude, and for us to say to any one, but especially to a mother, "Woman," would show a very great want of respect; but it was a manner of speaking which in that society implied no rudeness, for even princes addressed ladies of rank in the same way, and servants employed the same word to speak to their mistresses; just as people now address a lady by the name of Madam.

His mother left him to perform his own pleasure, and told the servants just to mind what he should say if he gave them any orders.

Now, there were six stone water-pots there, which had been used for water for various purposes, especially for purifying or washing the hands and feet and the cups and platters. These water-pots, or jars, learned men have reckoned, from the size of the measures used at that

time, to have held about fifty-four gallons. "Jesus saith unto them, fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it." When the governor had tasted the wine, he was delighted with the flavor, but did not know whence it came, and he said, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

Some persons have argued from this miracle that our Saviour approved of the use of intoxicating wines; but this is wrong, for the common wines of Palestine were not as intoxicating as our cider, and the Jewish people were very temperate; and, besides, we have no warrant for thinking that this wine, miraculously changed from water by our Saviour, contained any intoxicating principle; though tasting like their wine, it was not the fruit of the vine, nor had it been fermented; furthermore, to draw from this an argument in favor of indulgence in intoxicating drinks is to contradict the spirit of Christ's teachings. He requires us to deny ourselves, take up our cross,—that is, avoid the indulgence of selfish and sensual appetites,—and follow him. Doing this, we are in no danger of using intoxicating drinks freely.

### Christ's Conversation with Nicodemus.

#### JOHN III.

In this chapter we have an interesting conversation which our Lord held with Nicodemus, one of the sect of the Pharisees, and "a ruler of the Jews"; that is, a member of the great Sanhedrim,—a sort of parliament, consisting of seventy-one or seventy-two members,—and consequently he was one of considerable authority in Jerusalem; though this parliament was perhaps now somewhat altered in its character, and allowed only to meddle with religious matters, the government being under the Romans.

Nicodemus being afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Jews by going to see Jesus, went to him "by night." He respectfully addressed him by the name which the Jewish Doctors bore, and called



him "Rabbi," by way of distinction. He told him he believed him to be "a teacher come from God," and that he had given proof of it by the miracles which he had wrought, and which no common person could do.

Jesus replied that this was not enough to save him, but he must be "born again"; that is, born anew: in other words, he must undergo as great a change in his heart as if his old life had come to an end and he had been born anew into the world. He must be quite a different creature from what he had been. He was born in sin, but he must be born of the Holy Spirit, or he could never enter heaven.

Nicodemus could not understand him; but Christ told him not to "marvel," or wonder, at what he said; for as the wind blew which way it would, never seen by our eyes, yet felt in its power upon our bodies, so the Divine Spirit works unseen, yet powerfully felt, on the heart of the sinner before he can be saved. So, that as by nature he can not love God, now by grace he loves him; as by nature he practises sin, so by grace he practises holiness; as by nature he delights in folly, so by grace he delights in that which is good. This change of the mind is equal to a new birth, for none can understand it but those who have felt it; and those who have felt it know that they are "born again"—are "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

### **The Woman of Samaria.—The Nobleman's Son Cured.**

#### JOHN IV.

There is a very pleasing little narrative in this chapter about a woman of Samaria. She lived at a city called Sychar: Jacob formerly had purchased a piece of ground here, and gave it to his beloved son Joseph; and here was a well, which still bore the name of Jacob's well.

Jesus having occasion to pass that way on a journey, being hungry, thirsty, and fatigued, sat down by this well just at the moment the woman of Samaria went to it to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give him some to drink. The woman wondered at such a request from Jesus, he being a Jew, and the Jews and Samaritans having a very

bitter dislike to each other; for the Samaritans had in various ways endeavored to injure the Jews. Jesus then said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God,"—that is, that God has given his own Son to save lost men of every nation,—“and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water”; by this he meant the Holy Spirit's influences, which, because they are refreshing to the thirsty soul of man in search of peace and happiness, are often compared to water.

The woman did not understand him, and asked him how he could draw water elsewhere, having neither well nor bucket at hand; as if he thought himself wiser than Jacob, who had drunk the water of that well, and left it as a valuable gift to his family.



JACOB'S WELL.

Jesus told her that those who partook of that water would grow thirsty again, but that which he could bestow would afford full and everlasting satisfaction.

Still the woman could not comprehend his meaning, and either supposing he might know of some extraordinary water, or might be boasting of what he could not give, she pro-

posed putting him to the test, and said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Jesus then began a conversation which convinced her that he was no common man, and told her all about her private concerns.

She then said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet"; and not liking to talk about some things which she had wrongly done, she asked him to inform her which place of worship was most pleasing to God, that in which the Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim, or that in which the Jews worshiped at Jerusalem.

Jesus told her that the time was now coming when no one place in particular should be more holy than another, but every spot would be the same in the sight of God in which the worship was sincere; for

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The woman further answered him that she believed what he said was right; but the Messiah was expected soon to come, and then he would clear up all difficulties about the matter.

Imagine how surprised the woman must have been when Jesus said, "I that speak unto thee am he." The disciples, however, who were gone away to buy food, now returned, and so the interview ended.

Seeing Jesus thus engaged in what appeared to be an interesting conversation with a Samaritan woman, the disciples were quite amazed; but they would not take the liberty of asking Jesus why he did so.

In the meantime the woman, leaving her water-pot, hastened to the city, and told all her acquaintances there that she had seen the Messiah; for a person she had talked with had told her the most wonderful things; and they must come along with her, and see and hear him too.

While this was taking place the disciples begged of Jesus to eat of the food they had brought; but he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of"; and his mind was so intent on his work of doing good, which he called his meat, that he cared not about eating. The disciples, however, were often dull of understanding, and so they were now, for they thought that he had got some other meat, and wondered how he could have procured it. Jesus then explained to them his meaning: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." It wanted then four months of harvest-time, but he nevertheless had a great harvest to gather in—not of barley, but of souls. It was not a time then to eat and to drink, but to work; for the Samaritans were ready to receive him and to believe on him, and these were his precious fields, which were white and ready for harvest. And so it came to pass, for "many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him."

Having been prevailed upon to stop at Sychar two days, he then proceeded on his journey into Galilee; and going again to Cana, "where he made the water wine," he performed another miracle by curing the



sick son of a nobleman of Herod's court. This nobleman, hearing that Jesus was there, took a journey from Capernaum to see him, and to implore him to cure his son. Jesus knew how unbelieving the people of Capernaum were, and perhaps that the nobleman had been so himself, so Jesus reproved him and did not say he would cure his son, but told him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman, however, urged him to return and save his child. The kind heart of Jesus could not resist the yearnings of the fond parent over his beloved son, and he said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The nobleman relied on his word and hastened home. But before he got home some of the servants were sent on the road to meet him and to tell him the joyful news that his son was recovered; and on his inquiring at what time it took place, he found it was exactly at the time which Jesus had said.

Owing to this remarkable miracle, the second which Jesus performed at Cana, not only did the nobleman believe, but all his family were convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah; that is, "THE CHRIST, the Saviour of the world."

### Christ Cures the Disabled Man at the Pool of Bethesda.

#### JOHN V.

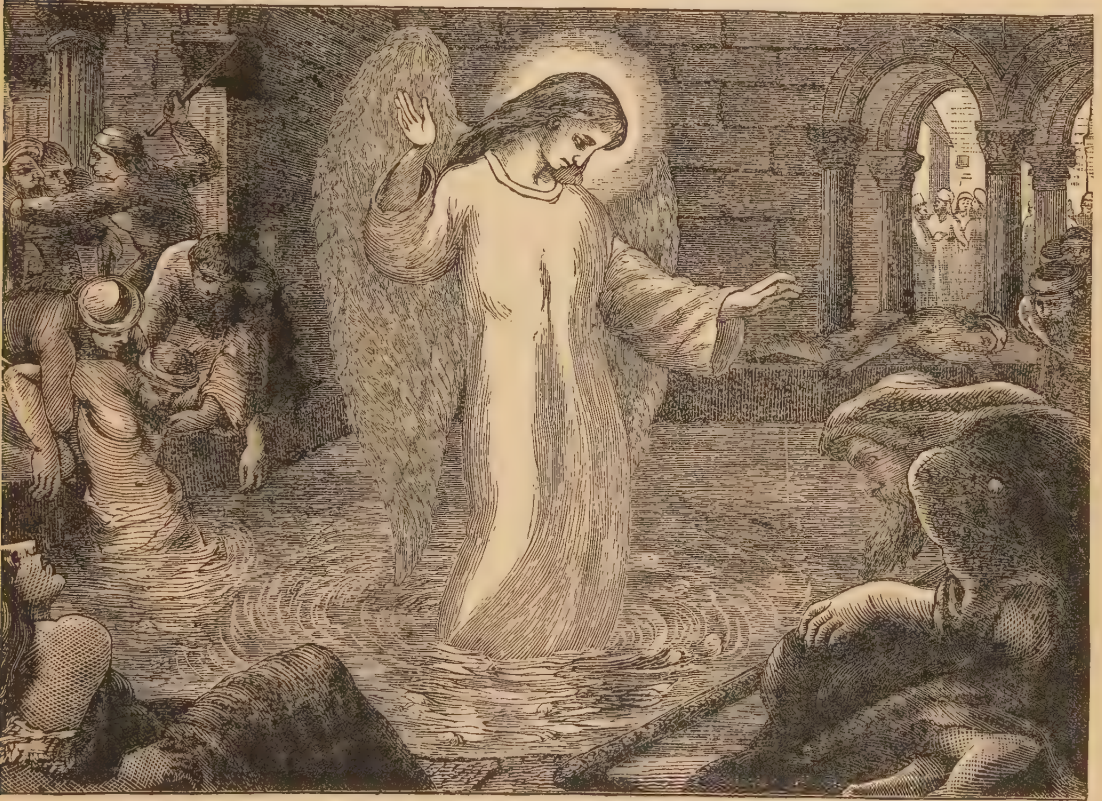
We now behold Jesus going, according to custom and in obedience to the law, to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem, on which occasion, a vast number of persons being assembled, he had the greater opportunity of doing good.

There was at Jerusalem a pool which, on account of some medicinal properties in its waters, was a sort of bath, to which persons with complaints of various kinds went in order to obtain a cure, and many had been cured by bathing in it. It seems, however, that it was necessary they should go in just at a certain time, when the waters were agitated by an extraordinary cause.

Jesus arriving at the pool, saw a poor man there who had been disabled during no less than thirty-eight years, and having no money to pay any one to wait upon him and put him into the water whenever it

began to stir, some other person always hurried into the pool before him just at the proper moment, and obtained cure instead of himself.

Jesus talked to him about his complaint, and learning his hard lot, asked him if he would like to be cured; and then he commanded him to take up his bed and walk. We have noticed a similar cure in the ninth chapter of St. Matthew, and there told you that the bed



AN ANGEL WENT DOWN AT A CERTAIN SEASON INTO THE POOL AND TROUBLED THE WATER.

used was a sort of mattress, or, we may add, if you have ever seen a sailor's hammock, it was something of that kind, so that a man in health could carry it without any great inconvenience.

This happened on the Sabbath day. Now, the Jews were very strict observers of the Sabbath, and so far they were right; and they would not allow any one to carry a burden on that day. So, seeing this man carrying his bed, they told him that he was breaking the Sabbath.



The man then excused himself for what he was doing, and intimated as much as that he could not in that instance be doing wrong, for he who had power to cure him had certainly a right to order him to carry his bed. The poor man could not afford to lose his bed, and he was not going to leave it by the pool. He did not carry it for the purpose of business, but only from entire necessity. Besides, all works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the Sabbath.

These were probably Pharisees, who, guessing that it was Jesus who cured this man, endeavored thus to prejudice him, for they took every opportunity to show their hatred to our divine Lord.

The man afterward finding that it was Jesus who had cured him, went and told the Jews, hoping, no doubt, that they would raise the fame of his divine Saviour; instead of which these wicked people only hated him the more, and sought to kill him by bringing him before their Sanhedrim, or court of justice, to have him condemned for breaking the Sabbath.

As yet, however, they could only threaten to stone him or to use mob violence toward him, for the plans afterward concocted by the Pharisees and priests for his destruction had not then been matured.

### **Christ compares Himself to Bread.**

#### JOHN VI.

Soon after the events mentioned in the last chapter Jesus had left Jerusalem and gone into Galilee, and at Capernaum and Bethsaida, and other towns on and near the Sea of Galilee, had taught and performed miracles. Withdrawing at last to the hilly region northeast of the Sea of Galilee for a short period of rest and quiet, he had been followed by a great multitude, and had taught and healed them for two or three days, finally feeding five thousand men and many women and children with five loaves and two small fishes, as you read in the fourteenth chapter of Matthew. The people who had been fed thought this an easy way to obtain a living, and as he could so easily work miracles they followed him across the sea to Capernaum, whither he had gone the night after the miracle. Here he took occasion to tell them that



he knew they sought only their own gratification in following him, and that their motive was wrong; they thought to make themselves rich and great by following him, but they were mistaken.

He then told them not to labor so much for the body as to forget to feed their souls: that to do this they must believe on him. They ungratefully replied that if he would rain manna from heaven they would. Jesus replied that his Father had sent them bread from heaven—the bread of life: they asked to be fed with it. Then Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life.” Yes, my dear young readers, those who believe in him find life for their souls. Bread sustains the body, and Christ only can sustain the soul.

Many of the Jews were so much displeased at the spiritual character of Christ's teachings that, though they had previously professed to be his disciples, they now “went back and walked no more with him.” Jesus said to the twelve whom he had chosen, “Will ye also go away?” Peter replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we know and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

### **Christ the Spring or Fountain of Happiness.—The Jews try to stone Christ.—Christ gives Sight to a Man born Blind.**

#### JOHN VII—IX.

Jesus had left the province of Judea for that of Galilee, for while he remained in Jewry, or Judea, “the Jews sought to kill him”; but he soon afterward returned thither at the feast of tabernacles, when all the males went to Jerusalem, and when the Jews erected tents, or booths, in which they dwelt and ate their meals, in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in tents in the wilderness. Here Christ went into the temple and taught the people; and they wondered at the divine truths which he told them. He also repeated his reproofs to the Jews, and they still tried to get a favorable opportunity to kill him, but they could not then do it. And in the last great and solemn day of the feast he stood up and cried aloud, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” You understand what you have read

about the woman at the well : Christ here means the same—that all true life proceeds from him, and that if any man wished then to be happy, by coming to him he could make him so ; from him he could always be supplied, as a thirsty man could from an overflowing spring ; he should be brimful of happiness, which he expresses by saying that “out of his belly ” should “flow rivers of living water.” Springs make rivers ; and the more plentiful the springs, the larger or more numerous the rivers. Thus his very heart and soul should abound with comfort and joy, always flowing like a fresh spring, and not like waters that might be dried up.

In the following chapter a woman was brought to him who had forsaken her husband and lived with another man. This was forbidden



TENT, OR BOOTH.

by the laws of God, and was to be punished with death. The Jews brought this woman to Christ, that he might say whether she ought to be punished or not. Now, if he had said that she ought, they would have accused him to the Sanhedrim and to the Roman government of taking upon himself to sit in judgment without any authority, which would have been a high crime ; and if he had said she was not punishable, they

would have accused him of contradicting the law of Moses. In both cases, therefore, they would have taken an advantage of him ; but, with his usual wonderful wisdom, he defeated their design, and instead of answering their question for his opinion, he said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Jesus knew that her accusers were as wicked as she, and this answer made them quite ashamed of themselves ; so they all slunk away one by one, leaving the woman with Christ, who faithfully and tenderly admonished her to “go and sin no more.”

Jesus still continued to exhort in the temple, and pointed to himself as “the light of the world,” and “many believed on him.” He also further reproved the Jews, who became so enraged with what he said to them, and especially when he spoke of his own eternal existence as

the Son of God, that they took up stones with which some builders were repairing the temple that they might throw them at him ; but Jesus escaped again from their hands, for his work on earth was not yet done.

And as Jesus passed by from the temple he saw a man who was born blind ; and he wet some clay with his spittle, and putting it on his eyes commanded him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash there. The man accordingly obeyed him, " and washed, and came seeing."

Now, the putting of clay on the man's eyes could not give him sight, nor could the washing in the fountain called Siloam ; but this was done to show us that we ought never to despise the use of any means, how simple soever they may seem, if those means are divinely commanded. Praying to God and hearing and reading the word of God can never save our souls ; but they are all means which we are commanded to use, and in using them, with a dependence upon God's grace, he is pleased to give his blessing.

This miracle attracted much notice, for the man was a public beggar, and everybody knew him, and now everybody asked, " Is not this he that sat and begged ?" Then the people wished to learn in what wonderful way he had got his sight ; and he told them. The Pharisees also soon heard about it, and they were also very inquisitive in the matter. The man told them the same story. Now, this miracle, like that of curing the impotent man, was done on the Sabbath day ; and being still full of malice against Jesus, these wicked Pharisees said that though Jesus might have cured the man, yet nevertheless he was a bad man, for he had broken the Sabbath. Some few, however, thought differently, and they quarreled among themselves about it. As for the blind man, he made up his mind at once that Jesus was a prophet, for he knew that no common person could do what he had done to his heretofore sightless eyes.

The Pharisees then sent for the man's parents, to know if he had really been born blind ; or, if so, whether perhaps some means had not been used to cure him to which they might ascribe his cure rather than to Jesus. The parents were as much surprised as the Pharisees, but as they knew nothing about the cure, they were obliged to set them



again inquiring of the man ; and, besides, had they known more about it, they were afraid to say what they thought of Jesus, for the Pharisees had threatened severely to punish any who should own that he was the true Messiah : they were liable to be put out of the synagogue, which was a sentence that did not exclude them from going to the synagogue but was only so called. It was, however, very severe. After this sentence no one durst hire the punished person to work, no one durst trade with him, and his goods were confiscated or taken away from him.

The Pharisees again, therefore, spoke to the man who was cured, and told him to praise God for it, and not Jesus, for he was no more than a sinner. But the man thought more highly of him. He who had opened his eyes had thrown some light of knowledge into his mind and given him to see that he was no sinful creature who had cured him. And after disputing their opinion, he at once asked them if they would become disciples of Jesus. This was more than their malicious and proud spirits could bear, and they then reviled him and Christ too. The man, however, reasoned well with them, and said it was very strange indeed that they could not take a different view of Christ's character, for it was plain enough that by no human power could he have opened his eyes : " Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."

Being unable any longer to reason the point, they had recourse to violence, and they said, " Dost thou dare to teach us ? " and so they cast him out of the synagogue.

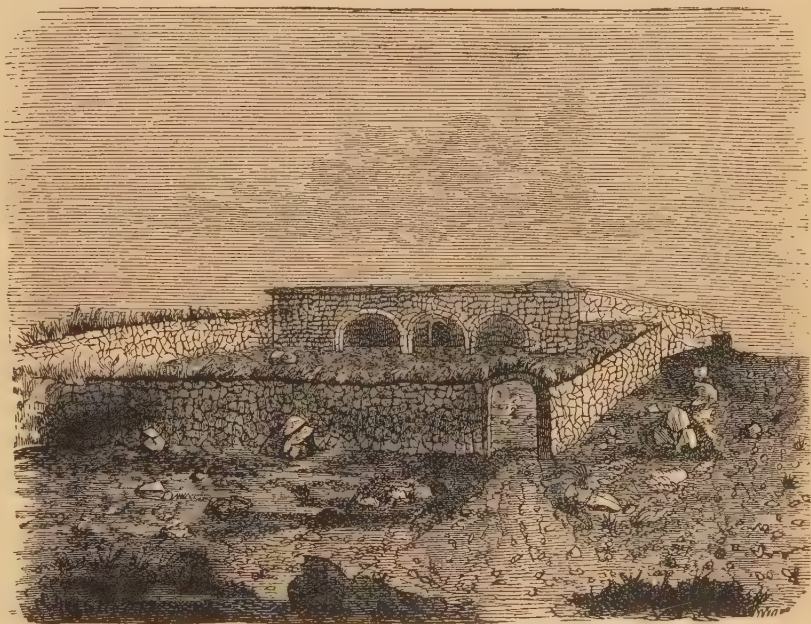
In this pitiable condition the Saviour sought for him and found him ; and he said to him, " Dost thou believe in the Son of God ? "—that is, Dost thou expect the Messiah ? Wilt thou trust in him ? for in the prophecies he was called the Son of God. The poor man's heart was made ready to receive Christ's instructions, and he said, " Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him ? " Jesus then told him that he himself was the Son of God, and the man worshiped him.

## Christ Compares Himself to a Door.—Christ, the Good Shepherd.

### JOHN X.

This is still a continuation of our Lord's conversation at the temple, at the time that the blind man received his sight; for though it is here divided into chapters, for the convenience of our reading it in smaller portions, it was not formerly so.

We find Christ here comparing himself to a door, through which it was necessary to enter properly into a sheepfold; for any one climbing over into it did so from bad designs—he was a thief and a robber. We have doors of entrance to our houses, and none but thieves and robbers think of getting into them by climbing up to the windows.



SHEEPFOLD.

The allusion was well understood by the Jews. The sheepfold was "an inclosure, sometimes in the manner of a building, and made of stone, and sometimes was fenced with reeds, and in it was a large door, at which the shepherd went in and out when he led in or brought out the sheep."

Now, the real shepherd would always enter in by that door,—that is, by the proper way,—and the man who watched the door inside, and

watched the sheep there, would always open the door on hearing his voice. The sheep, too, would directly know him when he called them by name ; for in Eastern countries the shepherds know their sheep as we know our dogs, and they give them names, and when they are called they will come to the shepherd out of the flock and answer to their names, as a dog we know will answer us. With the same familiarity they would also follow their shepherd, who frequently, in old times, went before them, playing some musical instrument. But if a stranger attempted to lead them, they took fright at the sound of his voice and ran away.

By the sheepfold Christ meant his church, to which he was the only way of entrance, and he tells the Pharisees and people that whoever before claimed to be the Messiah had deceived them, for he—Jesus—alone was the Saviour of the world ; therefore he alone that went in and out of this fold under his guidance would find happiness and peace.

Again, Christ says, "I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." So you read that David exposed his life and fought with wild beasts to save his father's flock. Christ, our good shepherd, actually gave himself up to death that his sheep might not perish, unlike the hireling that cares not for them, and if his life is endangered by protecting them, hastily flees and leaves them to the devouring wolf.

Thus he loved his church and gave himself for it. Among the Jews he had many sheep, whom he came to save ; but not among them only, but also among the Gentiles—among the heathen ; that is, the nations that were not Jews, of which we form a part. Jesus further says, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

### Christ raiseth Lazarus from the Dead.

#### JOHN XI.

At a village called Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, there lived two sisters, Martha and Mary, of whom we have read in the





CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE AT THE AGE OF 12 YEARS

"They found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," Luke 2, 46.



### SUPPER AT EMMAUS

"He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them," — Luke xxiv. 30



tenth chapter of Luke. They had a brother named Lazarus, and he seems to have been an excellent man, for Jesus loved him, as he did also Martha and her sister, who were pious women.

Lazarus was taken ill, and his sisters went unto him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." But Jesus delayed going to see him till he was dead. This Jesus did that he might try the faith of Lazarus' sisters, and see if they really believed in his divine power to



"BUT MARY SAT STILL IN THE HOUSE."

raise their brother again; and also that he might perform another miracle, to confirm the faith of his disciples.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany Lazarus had lain in the grave four days; and there were many Jews at the house of his friends, comforting the bereaved sisters. As soon as Martha heard that he was coming she hastened out to meet him, and perhaps to warn him, in case he might consider himself in danger from the Jews. Mary continued



a mourner in the house, as she did not know that Jesus had arrived, for she had a most sincere love for him.

Martha complained, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This proved how high an opinion she had of his power to save him; and she seems to have had faith enough to believe it possible that he might raise him from the dead.

After some further conversation with Jesus Martha hastened to call her sister, who, suddenly leaving the house, was supposed by the Jews to have gone to weep over her brother's grave, and so they followed her.

As soon as Mary came to Jesus she also said, as her sister had said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died"; showing by this that she had the same belief in his power. The blessed Jesus, who had all the feelings of our nature, was tenderly touched at the affecting scene, and going to his sepulchre "Jesus wept." Oh, the kindness of his heart! Who could but love him!

Some of the Jews who did not like him reasoned wisely enough, and said that since he had opened the eyes of the blind, surely he might as easily raise the dead; but they said this in order to raise a doubt whether he ever had done such a thing in reality as made the blind to see.

Jesus now went to the cave, in which, according to a custom of the Jews, the body was placed; "and a stone lay upon it," or rather upon the mouth of the cave. Jesus immediately desired the stone to be removed, and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes"—having several folds of linen wrapped about him, which was another custom of those times; "and his face was bound about with a napkin"—that is, round the forehead and under the chin. Jesus then said to the persons at the grave, "Loose him, and let him go."

This miracle made many more Jews believe in Christ; but some remained so astonishingly obstinate that still they would not believe he was the Messiah; and, being filled with hatred to him because he was becoming so popular, they went and told the Pharisees, probably that they might adopt more crafty or active means to take him and put him to death.

The Pharisees were more alarmed than ever, and began seriously to think what it was most wise to do to prevent the people from becoming the disciples of Jesus. They acknowledged that he did many miracles, and that if he proceeded in this manner all men would believe in him. This was a reason why they themselves should have believed in him, as the promised Messiah ; but it showed the blindness of their hearts that they did not.

“Jesus, therefore, walked no more openly among the Jews,” at or near Jerusalem ; he did not teach in their streets, nor work miracles, nor appear in public company ; but went and resided in a little and obscure city called Ephraim.

**The Precious Ointment.—Christ’s Entry into Jerusalem.—Some Greeks desire to see Him.—The Voice from Heaven.—He Washes His Disciples’ Feet.—More about Judas.—Christ’s tender Address to His Disciples.**

JOHN XII—XIV.

We have in this twelfth chapter a more particular account of the pouring of the precious ointment of spikenard on the feet of Christ, as he reclined at the table in the house of Simon the leper, of which some notice was taken in the notes on the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew. We are told here that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who thus showed her affection for her Lord and her gratitude for his miraculous restoration of her brother to life. We are also informed that it was Judas Iscariot who complained of the waste, and said it might have been sold for three hundred pence (about \$51) and given to the poor. What he really wanted was that the value of it should be intrusted to him, and he would have stolen it. He was so angry at our Lord’s rebuke of his greedy spirit that he immediately began to plot to betray his Master. The Pharisees now, and especially after his entry into Jerusalem, already described in the twenty-first chapter of Matthew, were so much displeased at Christ’s popularity among the people that they wanted to kill not only him, but Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

There were some Greeks (probably Jewish proselytes) who had come up to attend the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem at this time, and they came to Philip, one of the apostles, and said they wanted to see and talk with Jesus. They were, perhaps, the first fruits of that abundant harvest of Gentile souls which was soon to be brought into the garner of Christ. This gave our dear Lord great joy in the midst of all his trials. And while he was thus rejoicing and praying in the court of the temple, there came again to him, in the presence and hearing of the people, a voice from heaven, from the excellent glory, such as had been heard before, at his baptism and his transfiguration; and the voice said, in reply to his prayer, "Father, glorify thy name"—"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But notwithstanding these repeated attestations from heaven to his divine mission, the unbelieving Pharisees and Jews would not, with a few exceptions, receive him as the Messiah. Since he would not be the temporal ruler for whom they had hoped, to free them from the power of the Romans, they cared nothing for him.

A short time before the feast of the Passover, we are told, in chapter thirteen, that Jesus, in order to teach his disciples humility, and to prevent them from having such jealousies as they had hitherto manifested toward one another in regard to the places they were to occupy in his kingdom, after supper girded himself with a towel, and proceeded to wash his disciples' feet, and on their expressing surprise he said to them: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Some excellent Christian people think that Christ intended to establish this as an ordinance to be practised by the church in all ages, and they do practise it accordingly. Others think that he meant to teach us humility, and to show us that if we were truly his disciples we would be willing to do even humble and menial things for those who are his disciples, in his name and for his sake.

We also learn from this chapter, in relation to the wicked traitor, that Christ pointed out Judas as his betrayer to the other disciples, by saying, in answer to the inquiry of John, "Lord, who is it?" "He it



is to whom I shall give a sop" (the unleavened bread folded up and dipped into the stew or the gravy of the meat) "when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop he gave it to Judas," who went immediately out.

After Jesus had thus distributed the bread and the wine, he commenced a most touching and tender discourse to his disciples, answering their questions and removing their doubts and fears. He told them



"THEY WENT BACKWARD, AND FELL TO THE GROUND."

of his death and resurrection, and of his ascension to heaven to intercede for them, and of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to teach and guide them. In the progress of this discourse he gave them the parable of the vine, of which we speak in the next chapter, and closed this beautiful address to them by a prayer of the deepest earnestness and the most tender pathos, with and for them, in which, after extolling the obedience and love which they had manifested and would yet

manifest for him, he commended them, and all who should believe on him through their word, to the tender love and keeping of his heavenly Father. As the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane had already been fully described by the other evangelists, John does not dwell upon it, though himself an eye-witness of the agony of that hour; but he is more full and minute in his account of the circumstances of the arrest and trial, as well as of the fall of Peter, of the whole of which he was the only observer on the side of our Lord. He does full justice to the hesitation and unwillingness of Pilate to give judgment against the Saviour, and the consciousness of his own misdeeds, which made him afraid to be just to his prisoner.

### **The Parable of the Vine and Branches.**

JOHN XV.

Christ here speaks the parable of the Vine. The wine which had just been drunk at supper with his disciples afforded our divine Lord an opportunity of comparing himself with it. He had said he was Bread and Living Water to them that believed on him; and now he says, "I am the true Vine." He also compares his Father to the Husbandman.

You know that most of the wines, and all those which were drunk at this supper, were made of the fruit of the vine—that is, the grape. Christ compares himself to the vine, because he wished to show his disciples how closely by faith they were united to him. He therefore compares them to branches; and he says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Fruit is that which the tree produces of any real value. Now, in like manner as the branch united to the vine is expected to bring forth fruit, so those who are by faith united to Jesus Christ are expected to bring forth their fruits. What these fruits are we may learn from the like expressions in other parts of the sacred Scriptures—"fruits meet for repentance—fruits unto holiness—the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus to the praise and glory of God."



Now, if we profess to belong to Christ, and do not bear these fruits, we are cut off, as the husbandman cuts off the useless or withered branch; for we have no proper union with him, and receive no more life from him than a withered branch does from the tree. And if we belong to Christ, and really are his disciples from the heart, yet his heavenly Father purges the branches of the true vine. By purging is here meant pruning. The vine is taken much care of in the East. It is of great importance there, because it furnishes refreshing drink. Its grapes are very large indeed, and full of fine juice. But in a wild state it would not produce in this manner. All this fruitfulness is effected by cultivation; and if it have too many branches, the fruit becomes weakened; for the fewer the branches, the more juices the root sends up into those which remain, and the stronger the fruit which they yield. For this reason the knife is freely used to cut off the superfluous branches which are not likely to bring forth good fruit.



THE HUSBANDMAN.

You must recollect all this is merely the language of comparison; that is, “like as the husbandman prunes the vine, my heavenly Father will prune you who are my disciples”; and by pruning, cleansing, or purging the vine, as it is here called, we are taught that there is much in us that requires often to be removed, even if we are Christ’s real disciples; and it is chiefly by afflictions that God will prune us, so that we must not wonder when good people suffer under trials—they are the pruning-knives which purge or take away the branches that are useless.

Christ proceeds, urging that his disciples should therefore abide closely in him, living by faith on him as the Son of God, cleaving with all their hearts to him; and he tells them, “as the branch can not bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” Thus, too, we draw from him such life as is necessary to our increase here and our rejoicing hereafter. The power of his truth continually flows into the branches that abide in him, and through this fruits are continually produced.



Christ's certain Death from the Soldier Piercing his Side.—  
His Appearances after his Resurrection.

JOHN XVI—XXI.

We have now gone through the principal passages of the four Evangelists: a few things only remain in John of which it may be necessary that we should take a short notice.

The first is in the *nineteenth chapter, and twenty-fifth and following verses*. We here learn that three Marys stood by the cross of Jesus when he was nailed upon it, and dying with his crucifixion: Mary his mother, Mary his mother's sister—who was the wife of Cleophas—and Mary Magdalene. As for our sakes the blessed Jesus became poor, he had nothing to leave his mother; and as Joseph was without doubt now dead, and she was getting old, he was affectionately concerned for her that she should not want for comfort and support in her last days. This, I think, is a most lovely trait in the character of Jesus. Though he was then in the deepest agony of body on the cross, he forgot his pains to think on his poor afflicted mother. He, therefore, commended her to the care of his beloved disciple John. "Woman," said he,—and you remember that I have before told you that this name, so spoken, was a title of respect,—“behold thy son!” As much as to say, “I am going away from earth, and thou canst therefore have this body with thee no longer, but look upon John as thy son; and I know the kindness of his heart, that for my sake he will love thee and treat thee as a son.” And then he said to John, “Behold thy mother”; meaning, “behave toward her as a son; take care of her; comfort her in her old age.” Some writers say that Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years and then died; and others say that she lived longer and removed with him to Ephesus; but the Scripture gives us no more information on this subject. Jesus knew that John loved him, and would therefore obey him; and no doubt he behaved to her as a kind son to the day of her death.

In the *thirty-first and following verses* of the same chapter we also read some particulars respecting the crucifixion of the blessed Jesus



#### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

“He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. . . . He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.”—John x, 3-4.



**CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA**

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, 'Give me to drink.'"—John iv. 7.



which are not mentioned by the other Evangelists. The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that the legs of the victims might be broken, and that the bodies might be taken away. It was now the preparation time for the Sabbath day, which at the period of the Passover was a grand festival—it was one of the days of unleavened bread, and, some reckon, the day of the offering of the first-fruits. The Jews were therefore afraid of a breach of the law on that day, for, according to the Jewish law (Deuteronomy xxi, 22, 23), the body of one hanged on a tree was not to remain all night, but to be taken down that day and buried. Among the Romans the carcasses remained to be eaten by birds; but the Jews were taught to consider them as defiling the land, and viewed it as still more shocking for such a thing to take place on their sacred Sabbath.

Now, this circumstance led to a certain proof that Jesus had really died for us on the cross; a fact very important, for when he rose from the grave it might have been said that he was not then dead, and so it was no resurrection, but only a recovery from the faintness occasioned by his sufferings.

The Jews took care that the bodies should not be taken down alive, and that the criminals should not escape; so to hurry their death they used to break their legs, and this they now begged permission of Pilate to do. “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” The soldier did this to try if he were dead or not; and at all events he seemed resolved that he would give a finishing stroke to his life. The mixture of blood and water showed that the wound was of such a nature that, had he received it at any time, it was sufficient of itself to kill him. Now, his death was of the utmost importance to us. If Jesus had not died we must have perished. If he had not so died, we should, as just intimated, have had no such strong proof of his living again, which is equally important for our salvation; for now we who trust in him may rest on his word, “Because I live ye shall live also.”

And on these accounts the Evangelist John is very particular, not only in stating this fact, but in adding that he had it not from mere hearsay, but that he himself saw it, being near the cross at the time, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

The Evangelist John tells us of a very particular circumstance that happened after the resurrection of Jesus. Thomas would not believe what all the rest told him; and declared that nothing should satisfy him about the Saviour's resurrection short of seeing and touching him himself: "Except," said he, "I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe." Eight days after this Jesus appeared among the disciples, when Thomas was with them; and he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas was astonished, and instantly confessed that it was indeed his divine Master who was alive again; and he said to him, full of love, and gratitude, and praise, "My Lord and my God!"

John also relates another appearance which took place at the Sea of Tiberias. There were then present six disciples. Peter went a-fishing, and not having succeeded, he, and his companions were desired by Jesus, who stood unknown on the shore, to cast their net on the right side of the ship, and then they caught so many that they were unable to draw them up. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" in a very particular manner, on seeing this miracle, said directly, "It is the Lord"; and Peter instantly, without waiting to get ashore in the ship, cast off his fisherman's coat and swam ashore to meet Christ. It is said "He was naked," but this does not mean quite so, but only that he had thrown off his cumbrous upper garment; so we call a person stripped who has thrown off his coat, though he has many other garments remaining on him.

The other disciples soon after landed with the fish, and "they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread," which Jesus had also miraculously prepared.

Jesus then invited the disciples to dine. This was "the third time

that Jesus showed himself to his disciples." He had been often seen by individuals or small groups, but this was the third time he had showed himself to them when many of them were together.

And now he asked Peter to say if he still loved him. And he asked him three times, because he had denied him three times. He did this, perhaps, to humble Peter for his offense, and, at the same time, to show his disciples that he was yet a true disciple, whom they should not reproach, since he had forgiven him; for after each answer he commanded him to feed his lambs and his sheep, meaning the young and the old of his sincere followers, who are called his flock.

The Evangelist in conclusion tells us that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one," "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John simply meant that there were many more prayers, many more conversations, many more miracles, many more kind acts of Jesus, which would have filled an immense number of volumes had they been recorded; but as we can remember a few better than all, enough only are related that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing" we "might have life through his name."

Surely, too, we ought always to lift up our hearts and praise God—who evidently provides for our necessities, even to the least—that he has given us so much of sure and faithful testimony; so much that is comprehensive and soul-satisfying; so much that is written and adapted to the wants of every age, as well as every individual, notwithstanding that every creature differs more or less in mind, body, and estate. It clearly would not answer our condition in life, our surroundings, our capabilities, our wants, to have a fuller and more extensive or elaborate revelation than has been given. And we even bear within us the consciousness that, in the infinite goodness and love of our God, we have dealt out to us with a profuse and liberal hand everything—every line and word—that it is well for us to have in regard to our souls or their eternal concerns; indeed, all that we are able to bear. We can well fancy the All-wise Ruler moved with compassion toward us, in not being able to confide to our limited and



narrow understandings more of the great and grand truths of his glorious and limitless kingdom. We may, however, sit down and look out, in our imagination, into the distant realms of our future homes with rejoicing, knowing that after a few fleeting years we shall have a more complete knowledge of the life and work and teachings of Christ, as well as all his wonderful dealings with us. May this be the experience and joy of every reader of this work is the prayer of the writer.



JEWISH HIGH PRIEST OFFERING INCENSE.







# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

OR, a history, by Luke, of the ministry and labors of the Apostles of Christ. This fills the position in the New Testament of a needful supplement to the Gospels and an important and indispensable introduction to the Epistles. It begins with the ascension of the Messiah, and continues its history through about thirty years, to the end of the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome, A. D. 63. Its inspired character has never been doubted in the Christian Church. The first twelve chapters are mainly devoted to the spread of the Gospel in Palestine and to the earnest labors of Peter, James, and John, and their associates, in Judea and Samaria. From the thirteenth chapter to the close it is almost exclusively occupied with the work of the Apostle Paul as a missionary to the Gentiles. The graphic and interesting account of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of thousands on the day of Pentecost, and, subsequently, of the zeal, and miracles performed by Peter and John, of the martyrdom of Stephen, and the conversion of Saul and of Cornelius, render it one of the most attractive books of the New Testament; and the career of the Apostle Paul, his perils, sacrifices, and triumphs, are not less entertaining and delightful. Of all the inspired writers of the New Testament, Luke possesses the greatest descriptive power and the most lucid and finished style.

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History of what the Apostles of Christ said and did immediately after his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

## ACTS I, II.



It is generally agreed by writers on Scripture that this book was written by the Evangelist Luke. As "the former treatise," or his Gospel, was written respecting "all"—meaning a great number of things—"that Jesus began both to do and teach," as were also the treatises of Matthew, Mark, and John, so this was written to relate the "acts," or what his faithful servants *did* from the time of his death, and gives the history of about thirty years.

I told you in my remarks on the tenth of Matthew that "apostles" means persons who are *sent*; that is, in other language, *messengers*. The first disciples were Christ's messengers, as all good ministers must be, declaring to men the message of mercy which he wished them to know when he said, "Go ye out into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"; tell every creature the *glad tidings—the good news*—which I have told you.

Now we shall see how the apostles obeyed their divine Master, and what success attended their labors.

In this chapter we learn that Jesus appeared to his disciples at different times during forty days after his resurrection and taught them many important “things pertaining to the kingdom of God”; or, as it means, the period of preaching the Gospel, commonly called “the Gospel Dispensation”; that he told them to remain together at Jerusalem, and to “wait for the promise of the Father”; that they should have another comforter when he was gone,—the HOLY SPIRIT,—whose comforts they should feel in their hearts; that he should give them such power that nothing should hinder or discourage them in preaching the Gospel in all parts of the world.

While Christ was giving these instructions, he finally left them, as-



ANCIENT MESSENGERS IN THE EAST.

ascending up into heaven in a way like to that in which the prophet Elijah ascended, “and a cloud received him out of their sight.” Two angels then appeared, and, as the disciples gazed with wonder at the sky, they told them that in the same manner Jesus should again appear, meaning at the time when

he shall come to judge the world. The account of his being “taken up” which is here given is that which we commonly call *the ascension*, and the event happened on the Mount of Olivet, a spot distant from Jerusalem “a Sabbath day’s journey,” or the distance allowed for a Jew to walk on a Sabbath day, which was a mile, or perhaps something less.

After Jesus had ascended to heaven his disciples assembled together in “an upper room,” which was a retired place where they might pray, having those women who had so much loved the Saviour joined with them.

Peter now observed to those that were met together that as they lacked one disciple of their full number since the treachery of Judas, it was desirable to choose another, and they therefore

cast lots to know whom they should choose: "and the lot fell upon Matthias."

In mentioning Judas, Peter says that he purchased a field with the money which had been given him by the chief priests, "and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Now, we know that he returned the money to the chief priests, so that he could not have paid for the field; but, as they afterward purchased a field with the money, it could be said that he bought it. This field was on the brow of the precipice which extended to the deep valley of Hinnom, southwest of the city; and Judas, hanging himself there, fell into that deep and foul ravine.

The day of Pentecost was the fifteenth and last day from the day on which the Jews offered the first-fruits of their harvest, as a token of gratitude to God; and that day of offering the fruits was the second day of the feast of the Passover. On that day the disciples of Jesus were all met together "in one place"; and while they were so met a singular sound filled the house, as though a wind were rushing through it, and flames, like fire, appeared on each of those assembled, having the shape of tongues, cloven or divided. This was a miraculous token that "the Holy Ghost," whose divine influences Jesus had promised, to comfort, strengthen, and instruct his disciples, had now come among them, in proof of which they "began to speak with other tongues" than their own.

Now, you must know that it requires some time, and labor, and diligence to learn different languages, but these disciples spoke several languages at once; and the reason of this was that they might directly tell people of different countries who came to Jerusalem about all the great things that Jesus had done, and what had happened to him that sinners of mankind in every country might be saved.

At this time a great number of Jews, who inhabited various countries of the world, as they do now,—though the nation was not then entirely dispersed,—had visited Jerusalem, most likely to be present at the Passover; and hearing of the wonderful event which had taken place, they ran to the house where the disciples were, and there was universal astonishment when they found that these disciples could speak the



languages of all the countries whence they had come. Some of the people of Jerusalem, who hated Christ and his disciples, mocked, and said that they were drunk. They were more like drunken men themselves, who could suppose that men could speak other languages than their own merely because they were tipsy; and if they had not been full of prejudice and hatred against Christ and his disciples, they would never have suggested such a reason for this miraculous gift. The apostle Peter, who from this time, as the oldest, and perhaps the most thoroughly instructed in his Master's will and purposes, took the lead of the apostolic band, thought it best to preach to the multitude. And "when they heard it, they were pricked in their heart"; that is, "the word of God entered into them, which cut and laid open their hearts, and the sin and wickedness of them"; and they felt as you have perhaps felt when you have been detected in doing something you ought not to have done, and perhaps something very bad indeed; for shame and guilt pierce and wound the soul, as a sword cuts and pains the body. And they "said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them they must "repent"—that is, their minds must be changed; they must seek forgiveness and pardon from Christ for the wickedness they had done, and they must be "baptized," as a proof that they had embraced the religion of Jesus, and then the Holy Ghost would work in their hearts, and make them both holy and happy.

In the course of the day no less than "three thousand souls" repented and believed, from the preaching of Peter, and were baptized.

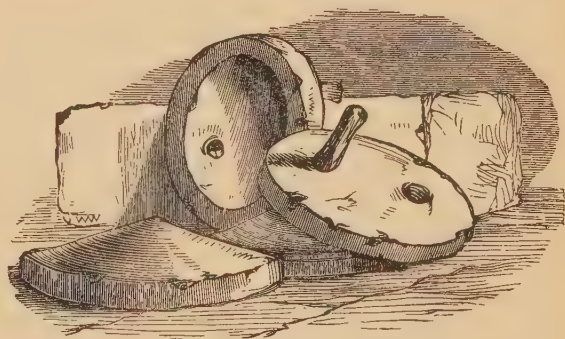
### The Lame Man Restored at the Gate of the Temple.—Peter and John taken before the Jewish Sanhedrim.

#### ACTS III, IV.

We have here the account of a miracle wrought by the apostles Peter and John. We are told that they went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, and there they saw a poor man who was born lame, and who was daily carried to the gate of the temple which was called "Beautiful," on account of its being more handsome than the other

gates. As he was unable to work, here he was to be seen begging alms of the charitable. As the two apostles entered, he asked them also to give him something. Little did he expect what he should get by that supplication. "Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his ankle-bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God."

The cure of the man drew together a great number of people, all wondering at what they saw; and Peter again embraced the opportunity of preaching a sermon to them, in which he told them the same truths as before, and urged them to repent of their sins, and to submit to Jesus as the Saviour of sinners; that Almighty Saviour, by whose power he had performed this cure.



EASTERN MILLSTONES.

The Jewish priests, who had opposed Christ, now tried to stop the mouths of his apostles, so they laid hold of them to prevent them from preaching again; and well might they fear the success of the apostles, for under this sermon no less than five thousand souls were converted!

The next day the apostles, with the man that was cured, were taken before the Jewish Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, where were assembled together their rulers, elders, scribes, and priests; and the apostles were asked by what power they had cured the man, whether by the help of the devil, as they thought, or by the help of God. At this moment the Holy Ghost filled Peter's heart with the greatest courage, and he again preached, having the rulers and priests to hear him. These were not converted, but nevertheless they were struck with wonder at "the boldness of Peter and John," for they recollected them as having been

among the timid disciples of Jesus, who once all forsook him and fled.

The apostles being set free, again joined their brethren, and told them of their treatment and escape. Then they all united together in prayer to God, to give them courage still to speak his word, and to enable them to show it was his word by performing more miracles. And God gave them another sign, as on the day of Pentecost—a mighty shaking of the place where they were assembled, such as when a house is shaken with the wind; and by this sign they knew that the Holy Ghost would give them new power and energy, which immediately was the case, “and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

### **Ananias and Sapphira Struck Dead for Lying.—The Apostles Peter and John thrown into Prison.—Released by an Angel.**

#### ACTS V.

There were now above eight thousand Christians; and, as they were liable to great afflictions and persecutions in embracing the faith of Christ, they all readily agreed to sell their possessions and to put all their money into one common stock, and so help one another, just as they might stand in need.

But a man named Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, while professing to do as the rest did, gave only a part, and slyly kept back the rest.

Liars think they can not be found out; but God can always find them out. And so he did here. It was revealed to Peter that Ananias had kept back part of his money, and he told Ananias that Satan had got possession of his heart, to do so wicked a thing.

Ananias was terrified at this discovery; he was convicted of his sin, and instantly fell down dead.

In about three hours after this Sapphira made her appearance, and, not having heard of the death of her husband, she expected to see him among the disciples of Christ, received as one of his sincere and liberal followers. Peter asked her for how much the land was sold for which Ananias kept back the money. And she told him the same



lie as Ananias, having agreed with him to deceive the apostles. Peter then rebuked her for daring to tempt or try the Spirit of the Lord by seeing if it were not possible to conceal from his inspired apostles so base an action; and he said, "Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost; and the young men came in and found her dead; and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." And well might they fear. These were awful examples of the hatred which God has to lying, for Peter could not have killed Ananias and Sapphira merely by what he said: it was God's hand that killed them.

The apostles continued working miracles and preaching, "and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." The people also, learning what cures the apostles performed in the name of Jesus, thronged to them with their sick, and were happy if they could get within reach of the shadow only of Peter's body, supposing that there must be some virtue in it, not understanding how he cured only by the power of the blessed Jesus.



SLAVES GRINDING CORN.

The Jewish rulers were now greatly enraged, that after they had so strongly commanded the apostles to be quiet, they still continued preaching about Christ and working miracles in his name; and they "laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison," where they put their malefactors, as if they had done the very worst deeds, instead of kindly curing the sick and the lame.

But God sent an angel, who opened the prison door at night and set the apostles free, desiring them to go to the temple and preach again to the people.

All that now happened to the apostles our Lord had foretold, as

Matthew informs us in the tenth chapter of his gospel: "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake." The apostles, therefore, rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Thus, from morning to night, every day, they continued at the work of preaching, and embraced every opportunity to teach, even in the temple itself, as well as from house to house. They made it the great business of their lives to exhibit Jesus to the people as the promised Messiah; also to clear from their spiritual eyes, beclouded by the forms and ceremonies and customs of the fathers, all that was dark and incomprehensible, so that they might appropriate him to their souls.

### **The Death of Stephen.—Saul of Tarsus.—Persecution of the Christians.—Simon Magus.—Philip and the Eunuch.**

#### ACTS VI—VIII.

In the sixth chapter we are told that the disciples chose seven men out of their number to take care of the poor among them, that they should not be overlooked; Stephen, who was afterward martyred, was among those now chosen. It is one beautiful feature of Christianity that it never overlooks the poor.

The disciples of Jesus still continued to increase in numbers, and even many of the priests were at last converted.

Stephen was a man very "full of faith," and he "did great wonders and miracles among the people." Like Peter and John, therefore, he was dragged before the council; and as there was no crime committed by him to condemn him, false witnesses were procured; and wicked men, for the sake of a reward, made up a story against him, that he had spoken blasphemous words against the temple and the law. Stephen was quite calm and happy; "and all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." The good man made a noble reply, and boldly told them of

their wickedness and of that of their fathers before them. He charged them with being "the betrayers and murderers" of Christ, and cut them so to the heart with what he said that in their rage they, like a pack of dogs, "gnashed on him with their teeth." Then, thrusting him out of the city, they stoned him, while he called upon God, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And while they yet stoned him, he kneeled and prayed for his persecutors, and then "fell asleep." "Fell asleep!" Stephen was amidst a shower of stones, and he fell asleep! Saints when they die fall asleep. When we sleep, we rest; and death to them is no punishment, but only a rest. Stephen was the first Christian martyr.

And here begins the history of the most extraordinary man among all the apostles. At this time he was "a young man, whose name was Saul," and who was an enemy to Jesus, and took care of the clothes of the false witnesses that had pulled them off that they might the better stone the pious Stephen. Indeed, he "was consenting to his death," which means here that he even "took pleasure" in it. "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria," fleeing wherever they could to escape the fury of their enemies; the apostles only remained at Jerusalem, still to bear witness in behalf of Jesus. Among the persecutors none were more active than this Saul; for "he made havoc of the church," falling on them like a wild beast on his prey, "entering into every house, and haling men and women,"—that is, dragging them by force,—"committed them to prison."

This persecution, however, turned out for good. Instead of checking the progress of the religion of Jesus, it only spread it abroad the more; for the disciples being driven from Jerusalem, "went everywhere preaching the word." And among those who preached with very great success was Philip, one of the seven who went to Samaria and preached Christ unto the people. And they all with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he wrought. "And there was great joy in that city."

And there was a man at Samaria, named Simon, whom we are



accustomed to call Simon Magus; that is, Simon the magician or conjurer, because he used cunning arts like the magicians of Egypt. This man "bewitched," or astonished, the people with his tricks, and they thought he was some wonderful person. But when they heard the wonderful things about Jesus which Philip had to tell, and saw how he cured the lame and the sick and others, they would no longer believe in Simon Magus, but became disciples of Jesus; and Simon professed to be a disciple also.

The apostles at Jerusalem, informed of the great things that were being done in Samaria, sent Peter and John to assist Philip in his work. And they laid their hands on some of the disciples, as a sign of imploring the Holy Spirit to give them peculiar courage and abilities, that they might become fellow-laborers in their great work; and the Holy Ghost gave them extraordinary powers, as had been done to the disciples assembled on the day of Pentecost. Simon, seeing this, and having been left out of the number, offered Peter money if he would enable him to do the wonderful things which he saw the others could do; that is, speak in different tongues and heal diseases and the like. Here he showed that his heart was awfully darkened, or he must have seen that no money could purchase such power, and that it could only have been given from above. This Peter told him, and exhorted him to repent, and pray God to forgive him for such wicked thoughts. It is most likely that Simon Magus, seeing he had lost his chance of being popular and of making money by his old tricks, wished now to attain the same ends by means of the gifts of speaking and healing, having no design to glorify Jesus by what he might say and do; and it is generally believed that he died a bad man, for we never read of his heart having been changed.

But we have directly after a more pleasing account in the narrative of the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip, having been ordered by an angel to take a journey on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, was traveling in obedience to the divine command, when he met with an Ethiopian dignitary; an officer "of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship."

He was now returning, and was sitting reading in his chariot. Philip was inclined, by a peculiar impression made upon his mind by the Spirit of God, to hold conversation with this eunuch; and, approaching his chariot, he found that he was reading aloud from the prophet Esaias; that is, Isaiah—the former being the Greek and the latter the Hebrew name for the prophet. And Philip said, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” Now, the eunuch, though riding in a chariot, was a very humble man; and, sensible that he needed to learn all that he could, especially about the Saviour, he replied, “How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” And he was reading the prophecy about the blessed Jesus being led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer—but he was at a loss to know whether it spoke about the prophet or about any other person. Philip then explained it to him, and preached about Jesus. No doubt he told him that the prophet was setting forth the purity, innocence, meekness, and patience of the suffering Jesus—“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”; and showed him how he was led to be crucified, and so shed his precious blood for us, as the lambs’ blood was shed upon the Jewish altars. No doubt Philip also told him of the command given to the disciples to go and teach all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For, on arriving where there was some water, the Ethiopian desired to be baptized, and declared his firm belief that Jesus was the Son of God, and, therefore, he was willing to become one of his disciples; so Philip baptized him. Philip was now miraculously removed from his presence all on a sudden, a circumstance which must have satisfied the eunuch’s mind that he was no inferior person, but a messenger sent from God to teach him the way of salvation. So the eunuch went on homeward, rejoicing that he had been favored with such news of salvation and had found the knowledge of Christ crucified. The Scripture does not tell us, but some respectable ancient writers do, that this eunuch founded a flourishing church in his own country. Those who know Christ will try to make others know him also.

## Remarkable Conversion of Saul of Tarsus.—Peter cures Eneas of Palsy.—Raises Dorcas to Life.

### ACTS IX.

We shall now hear more about Saul of Tarsus, whose history has been interrupted by noticing the persecutions of the Christians, and the labors of Philip.

“Not satisfied with the murder of Stephen, and with the havoc he made at Jerusalem,” we learn here that Saul was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” and he

therefore went to the High Priest and begged him to give him authority to go to Damascus, the capital city of Syria, that he might there search for the Christians, and take all that he could find bound to Jerusalem.

But the grace of God stopped him, as it has many a wicked person, in his career. “As he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from



OX-CART IN PALESTINE SHOWING THE GOAD.

heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Now, you must observe that Saul did not know Jesus; that Jesus was in heaven, and therefore he could not persecute him in person; but Jesus so loves those who love him that, in persecuting his sincere followers, he felt the cruelty of Saul as if it had been inflicted upon himself. And Saul said, “Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,” or goads, as a stubborn bullock would against the spiked stick with which his driver



would urge him on with his work in the plow. Saul's spirit was immediately subdued; and he who made others tremble now trembled himself, and said, like a submissive servant, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The great light which had flashed upon him from heaven had blinded his eyes, and he was obliged to be led into Damascus as a blind person; and there, during three days, he could neither see, nor eat, nor drink. The Lord, now seeing Saul humbled and praying for mercy, commanded a disciple of the name of Ananias to search him out, and to speak comforting words to him. Ananias knew what a bitter persecutor Saul was, and was afraid to go near him, but the Lord told him that Saul was one of his chosen vessels; and as men put treasure into urns, and such things, so he would put the treasures of his grace into the heart of Saul, and make him one of his most eminent ministers. So Ananias went to the house where Saul was, and restored him to sight as he was commanded to do, and the Holy Ghost gave sight at the same time to his before darkened mind, and taught him everything that could qualify him to preach Christ to sinners and show them how he was a Saviour. And Saul was at the same time baptized as another disciple of Christ. Instead of persecuting the disciples, Saul now joined himself to them, and remained a while with them at Damascus. And there "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

The Jews now tried to kill him, as he had tried to kill others, and they hid themselves in certain places to put him to death by suddenly falling upon him; and they watched the gates of Damascus night and day that he might not escape. However, the disciples, notwithstanding their vigilance, managed to get him out of the city; for the house of one being built on the city wall, he was let down by a basket from a back window and so got away from the city without passing through either of the gates.

Saul then went to Jerusalem, but his name was so terrifying there as a persecutor that when he offered to unite with the disciples they were all afraid of him. They most likely supposed that he only professed to be a Christian that he might the better learn their secrets,

and so play the part of spy, and inform against them, and get them to be imprisoned and put to death. At length Barnabas told the disciples not to fear, and what wonderful things had happened to Saul, "and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus."

At Jerusalem, also, the new apostle met with the most violent enemies, who seemed the more enraged against him because he was a deserter from their ranks. Here the Grecians, as they are called, or Jews that used the Greek language, and not Greeks, who were heathen, "went about to slay him," and he found no rest until he went to his own city of Tarsus. After this the churches were allowed for some time to enjoy a little rest.

We now leave Saul at Tarsus, and return to notice what Peter was doing. We are told that he paid a visit "to the saints which dwelt at Lydda."

Lydda, where Peter went, was a city about thirty miles from Jerusalem. Here Peter worked another miracle in the name of Jesus, and cured a certain man named Eneas, who had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

We are next informed about a good woman, whose name you may often have heard mentioned, because her memory is held in great repute on account of her being very charitable. Her name was Tabitha in the Syriac language, and means *a roe*; and because a roe in the Greek is called Dorcas, that was the name which she bore among the Jews that spoke Greek. She lived at Joppa, a town now called Jaffa. This excellent woman died, and was laid out. Peter being then at Lydda, which was near Joppa, the disciples sent to him to tell him of their grief, and no doubt with a view to his restoring her to life. Peter hastened to Joppa, and there he found the dead body in an upper chamber, "and all the widows" to whom Dorcas had been very kind and charitable "stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." It is from this circumstance that we call some of our societies for giving clothes to the poor, Dorcas societies.

Peter ordered every one of the widows to leave the room, that he

might, in a more undisturbed way, kneel down and pray to God; and having done so, he said to the dead body, "Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows he presented her alive."

These miracles caused many more to believe in Jesus: and Peter continued for some time at Joppa, with one Simon, a tanner, no doubt busily engaged in following up these miracles and conversions, by exhorting the disciples to continue firm in their attachment to Jesus, from which they would be liable to be shaken by future persecutions, which were to be expected from the envious Jews.

### Cornelius's Dream.—Peter's Vision.

#### ACTS X, XI.

There was a man living at Cesarea, commonly called Cesarea Philippi, on the borders of Syria, whose name was Cornelius, and he was a centurion, that is, an officer commanding a hundred men, who were Italians, subject to the Roman government. This man was very pious and charitable, and particularly fond of praying to God. Now, while he was devoutly engaged in one of the hours of prayer, an angel of God spoke to him in a vision; that is, he saw the angel, not in a dream by night, but in broad day; and the angel said to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God;" meaning that the prayers which he had put up in faith, for himself and family, and the charitable actions he had performed from a principle of love, were like sacrifices upon the altar, which ascended to God with acceptance. And he desired Cornelius to send men to Simon the tanner's house, at Joppa, where Peter resided, and Peter would teach him about those great things which he was desirous of learning. So he sent two of his servants, and a pious soldier, to make inquiries for him at Joppa; these were, no doubt, all concerned faithfully to do the business about which Cornelius had informed them.

These messengers went to Joppa on the next day after the vision of Cornelius, and reached it at another hour of prayer used among the



Jews, and Peter at that moment was praying, and fell into a trance ; that is, he lost all sense of what was going on, and felt as if he were a happy spirit, departed from the body ; and he saw heaven opened, and a large sheet let down to earth and spread out before him as a table-cloth, in which were wild beasts and creeping things, as well as tame beasts and fowls ; and a voice desired him to kill and eat. Peter, who had strictly observed the Jewish law, had never eaten anything which it forbade and called unclean, and he hesitated to touch the offered food. The voice then said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This vision seems to have been repeated three times, to impress his mind the more strongly. Peter, on coming

to himself, could not think what all this could mean ; but while he was thinking upon it the messengers from Cornelius arrived at his door, and he was urged by a secret impression of God's Spirit to meet them and go with them.

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, the good man had assembled his relatives and friends, supposing that some blessing from God would attend this

extraordinary meeting, and he wished them to enjoy it as well as himself.

On seeing Peter, Cornelius fell at his feet "and worshipped him," or paid him reverence. He was not a foolish heathen, who paid him worship as if he had been a god, but he paid him very high respect as a servant of God, sent to instruct him. Peter, however, thought that he paid him more reverence than he ought, and, fearing that he might rob Christ of the honor which was really due to him, and none other, he "took him up, saying, Stand up ; I myself also am a man."

And now Peter saw the plain meaning of the sheet with the unclean creatures of which he was to eat. This was a sign to teach him that although he was a Jew, yet he was now to unite with those



JOPPA, FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

who would believe in Christ, of all nations; and he said to the company: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Cornelius now told Peter for what reason he had sent for him, and that his little company were assembled to hear from him any words which God might speak through his lips.

Peter then preached to this Gentile company the same truths which he had preached to the Jews, and encouraged them to believe in Jesus as a Saviour, assuring them that "in every nation he that feareth" God, "and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"; and that whosoever believed in Jesus should receive remission, or enjoy the putting away of their sins, so that they should not be brought against them in the day of judgment.

While this honored apostle was preaching, the Holy Ghost also came upon these Gentiles, as on the Jews assembled on the day of Pentecost. They also were now filled with zeal for the honor of Christ, and could speak in tongues



TEMPLE CANDELABRA.

they had never learned, so as to explain to all they might meet, of any country, the great things about their salvation. "They of the circumcision," that is, the Jews who were present, were astonished; for they had no notion that the Gentiles would receive the Spirit, but thought that this blessing was to belong to the Jews only. These persons, having received the Spirit, were also baptized, to show that they were the disciples of Christ.

The apostles, who were scattered at the time of the persecution of Stephen, still continued "preaching the word"; but they confined their labors to the Jews only, and to the Grecians, or Jews which spake

the Greek language, commonly called Hellenist Jews, which means Grecian Jews. These apostles preached at Phenice, Cyprus, Antioch, and elsewhere: "and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." And Barnabas being sent from Jerusalem, paid a visit to the new disciples at Antioch, where he was much delighted, for he "saw the grace of God," in its holy and happy effects, in the lives and dispositions of the people, and this made him "glad"; and while he preached, "much people" were also "added unto the Lord." Barnabas also got Saul of Tarsus to help him, and they labored together for a whole year, "and taught much people."

It was at this time that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

The eleventh chapter closes by telling us about a kind act of the Christians at Antioch, in sending needed comforts to their brethren in Judea. At this time Agabus, who was endowed with the spirit of prophecy, foretold that a famine would shortly take place all over the world, "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar," a Roman emperor. The Christians at Antioch, which was a fine city in Syria, had some reason to believe that their brethren at Jerusalem would suffer much from this famine, and so they made no hesitation, but sent them what money they could spare to meet their wants, when the time of need should come.

## The Apostle Peter's Imprisonment and Miraculous Escape.— Herod's Miserable Death.

### ACTS XII.

The Herods were all bad men. Herod the Great slew the infants at Bethlehem; Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist; and Herod Agrippa "killed James the brother of John with the sword," which was one of the modes of putting to death among the Jews that was considered very disgraceful, and was especially inflicted on those who deceived the people.

As he saw that the wicked Jews were pleased at his murder of one of our blessed Lord's apostles, he proceeded next to persecute Peter,



and by his orders this faithful servant of Christ was thrown into prison, and carefully guarded by "four quaternions of soldiers," that is, sixteen—a quaternion consisting of four; and these quaternions relieved one another's guard, and so watched him by turns, night and day. It was impossible that he could escape but by some miracle, for his hands were chained, and when he slept at night he had two soldiers lying by him, one on each side, and the chain on each hand was fastened to a hand of each soldier.

But nothing can withstand the power of God; and when the Christians met together to pray for Peter's deliverance, God heard their prayers and sent his angel to set him free. The very night that this happened was to have been Peter's last night in prison; for on the next morning Herod intended to have exposed him to the people, and to have put him to death, as he did James. When the angel appeared, surrounded with brightness which illuminated the prison, he awoke Peter by touching his side, and, raising him up, "his chains fell from off his hands"; and having put on his girdle and his sandals, he followed the angel out of the prison. All this was so sudden and surprising that Peter scarcely believed it was real, and thought he must be dreaming. When they had passed the first and second ward, or watch, they had to escape through the strongest gate of the prison, a gate made of iron, and through which they could enter directly into the city. This gate opened of its own accord, and so Peter escaped from the hands of his enemies. What was the state of the guards during this time is not said: perhaps a deep sleep came over them, or their sight was darkened so much as to be unable clearly to distinguish objects at the moment.

The angel having left Peter in the street, he began to recover from his astonishment, and comforted himself that God had really interposed to save him. Then, without loss of time, he hastened to his fellow Christians, who were just then met together for prayer at the house of "Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." Having knocked for admission, a young woman named Rhoda, or Rose,—for that is the meaning of Rhoda,—coming to the gate, asked from within who was there, and on hearing Peter's voice was so overcome

with joy that she ran in and told the company instead of stopping to let him in. Though they were praying, and no doubt praying for his release, yet they could hardly believe that it happened so soon, and they said to the young woman, "Thou art mad"; and when she assured them it was true that Peter was at the gate, they said, "It is his angel": they thought it was some heavenly messenger that had assumed his form to bring them some news about him.

As Peter continued knocking they went and opened the door; and, to their astonishment, they saw Peter himself, and he then told them how he had escaped.

When daylight came, Peter being missed from the prison, the soldiers were all in alarm; and Herod, on being told what had happened, was so enraged that he ordered the poor soldiers to be put to death, or executed, as we say, for their negligence.

Herod now left Jerusalem and went on a journey to Cesarea, a city about fifty-five miles from it. Here he was visited by some persons of importance, who were sent from the people of Tyre and Sidon, to reconcile him after some offense which he had taken, and on account of which they feared he would make war against them. This would have been ruin to them, for they lived by merchandise, which they could not then so extensively sell; and, as they were not accustomed to the labors of the field, they were also "nourished by the king's country"—that is, received their food from it, especially their corn. Herod appointed a day to receive the supplicants, as he sat on his throne; and, being very splendidly dressed with robes which Josephus, the Jewish historian, says were richly worked with silver that sparkled brilliantly in the sun, he delivered a speech to the ambassadors of Tyre and Sidon, in the presence of a great multitude of people. The foolish people, in order to compliment the king, cried out, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." The more foolish king was delighted with this praise, and instead of reproving them for their blasphemy, in so extolling a poor mortal like themselves, he silently heard and rejoiced in their flattery. But God can punish kings that offend him, as well as poor men; and while this impious king was setting himself up for a god, an angel secretly smote him

“because he gave not God the glory” in reproving the profane people, “and he was eaten of worms,” and died.

## The Travels, Sufferings, and Success of Paul and Barnabas.

### ACTS XIII, XIV.

In this chapter we find Barnabas and Paul traveling about together to preach the gospel. They went to Seleucia, a city of Syria, and thence “they sailed to Cyprus,” an island in the Mediterranean Sea. There they visited Salamis, a chief city of Cyprus; and thence they proceeded to Paphos, on the same island.

We are here told that Saul was also called Paul. It was common to have two names of these kinds; for Saul was the Hebrew name by which this apostle was known among the Jews, but Paul was his Roman name.



ANCIENT JEWISH IDOLS.

From Paphos they next “came to Perga, in Pamphylia,” a country in Asia, of which Perga was the chief city; and from Perga “they came to Antioch in Pisidia,” so called to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria. Here they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and were invited by the rulers to speak; and Paul preached a sermon to the people, the design of which was to show that Jesus was the Messiah, the anointed one of God, for whom the Jews had long looked; that he was of the seed of David, as foretold by the prophets; that though he had died, he had also risen again, and that now they were come to preach salvation in his name.

The people were so struck with this sermon that they wanted to have another on the next Sabbath; but the rulers would not allow of it, for they were jealous because the preacher had attracted so much attention. Then Paul and Barnabas told them that since they had refused to hear any more about Christ, they should carry the glad



tidings to the Gentiles or heathen, which the heathen, at Antioch, were glad to learn; and many of them heard the holy preachers and believed.

The Jews then raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and got some women, who had gained fame as devout women from their attention to the laws of their religion, and who were also of rich families, to help them in driving these servants of Christ out of the city. So they shook the dust off their feet, as Christ had told them to do if their message was not received in any place, as a sign of displeasure against it, and they "came unto Iconium," another place on the borders of the country.

At Iconium they again went into the Jews' synagogue, and "a great multitude," both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed their divine message.

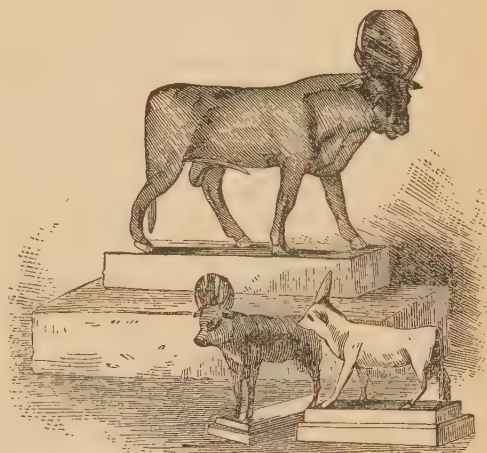
But the Jews and Greeks were now greatly divided among themselves; some of them believed, and some of them did not believe, notwithstanding all the divine proofs of the heavenly message; and as parties rose very high, and it was determined by some that they would even stone Paul and Barnabas, they left the place, that they might carry the Gospel elsewhere, where the hearts of many more would be ready to receive it.

They now "fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia," at no great distance, "and there they preached the gospel."

Here a man, who was born a cripple, was sitting to hear a discourse, when the apostle Paul, perceiving that he had faith in the truth of his message, addressed him before all the people, and "said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

The heathen people were so astonished and delighted that they said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They thought there were many gods, and that these were two of them. They knew no better, not having the Scriptures; and they took Barnabas for Jupiter, one of their gods, and Paul for Mercury, another of them; and, according to their custom of worshiping and honoring their deities, the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the

people—that is, have sacrificed the oxen to Paul and Barnabas; but the apostles rent their clothes, as the Jews did when they heard blasphemy, and showed what horror they felt that the people should make such a mistake. They then declared they were only men, and exhorted them to cast off their false gods, and believe in “the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.” The people were, however, even then with difficulty prevented from worshipping the apostles. Yet notwithstanding this servile adoration of them, when, soon after, some Jews arrived in the city from Antioch and Iconium, who told them how the apostles had been driven from those places, and spoke against them—these same people who had seen the miracle performed on the lame man, and would then have adored the apostles, now were persuaded to stone Paul, so fickle were they; and they hurt him so much that he appeared to be dead, and his body was dragged by them out of the city. He must have been dreadfully injured by this treatment; but God left the people without excuse for future punishment in thus treating his servant, and tried the boldness of Paul in his cause; and when he was left for dead, God wonderfully restored him, so that he was immediately able to pursue his journey to another place; “and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe,” a city of Lycaonia, as mentioned in the sixth verse, and there they made many disciples; and then they revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, to instruct, comfort, and establish the minds of those that had believed, that they might not be frightened at their persecutions.



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN IDOLS.

Here the Christians now formed themselves into churches; and the apostles having taught them and prayed with them, set them in order, and appointed proper persons from among them to manage the worship of God, and for other Christian purposes.

Then they passed through Pisidia, the country where Antioch was, and came to Pamphylia, in Asia, and preached at Perga in that country, and thence went into Attalia, a seacoast town on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea. Then they took shipping and sailed to the other Antioch, which was in Syria, and delighted the Christians there by telling them of their travels, and of the great success which, notwithstanding all opposition, had attended their preaching of the Gospel of Christ—"and there they abode a long time with the disciples."

## Disputes Among the Christians at Jerusalem Settled by the Apostles.

### ACTS XV, XVI.

While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, in Syria, some persons from Jerusalem came to Antioch and raised a dispute. Paul and Barnabas, therefore, went to Jerusalem to settle the question.

The affair being quietly settled, Paul and Barnabas now resolved on revisiting all the places where they had preached the Gospel; and Barnabas wished John, whose surname was Mark, to accompany them; but he, having been their companion on a former occasion and left them to bear their labors and dangers alone in a manner that did not quite please Paul, who perhaps thought him timid, or not sufficiently zealous, Paul did not wish to have his help. This caused a misunderstanding between Paul and Barnabas, and so they parted company. Barnabas, taking Mark with him, sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, and, as we learn in the latter part of the fourth chapter, the native place of Barnabas. Paul, accompanied by Silas, took another route, and went through Syria and Cilicia, which was his native country, and visited the churches or assemblies of Christians whom he had before brought, through his preaching, to receive the religion of Christ.

Among the places visited again by the apostle Paul were Derbe and Lystra. At the latter place he found a young disciple named Timotheus, or Timothy,—the same to whom he afterward wrote the Epistles. The mother of this young man was a Jewess, but his father was a Greek; and so it happened that he was not circumcised. Now,



as Paul wished to have his aid as a fellow-laborer, seeing that he was a youth of fine talent and spirit, but as the Jews would not have allowed him to speak in the synagogues unless he had been circumcised, Paul therefore "took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters"; who, knowing that his father was a Greek, and therefore had not had the rite performed upon him, would have raised objections to his preaching.

And now they traveled throughout Phrygia in Asia, and the region or country of Galatia, in that part called Asia Minor; then they came to Mysia, another country in Asia Minor, and "assayed," or attempted, to go into Bithynia, another country also in Asia Minor, but were prevented by a particular impression made on their minds by the Spirit of God. Perhaps had they gone, their lives would have been taken, and these God designed to spare for future labors. So they did not stop at Mysia; but "came down to Troas," then a colony of the Romans, now called Alexandria.

Being prompted by the Spirit of God in a vision, or sort of trance, which happened in the night, and in which a man of Macedonia appeared before Paul and said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," Paul proceeded thither, which was a very large country in Europe. He loosed, or set sail, from Troas, and reached Samothracia, an island in the Archipelago, and the next day Neapolis, a seaport, which was a part of Macedonia. From thence he went on to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and stopped there some days. Here, on the Sabbath day, they visited one of the spots where the Jews worshiped, and "spake to the women which resorted thither."

Among these women was one named Lydia. She was a seller of purple—most likely of purple dye, which was a valuable article at that time—and she belonged to a place called Thyatira, a large city in the province of Asia, in Asia Minor. She was a worshiper of the one true God, but knew nothing of Jesus Christ. But now she heard him preached, the Lord opened her heart, like a door, to let him into it by faith; and she received Jesus there, and embraced all the important truths spoken about him by Paul. And she was baptized, and received

the sacred messengers into her house, while they remained in that neighborhood.

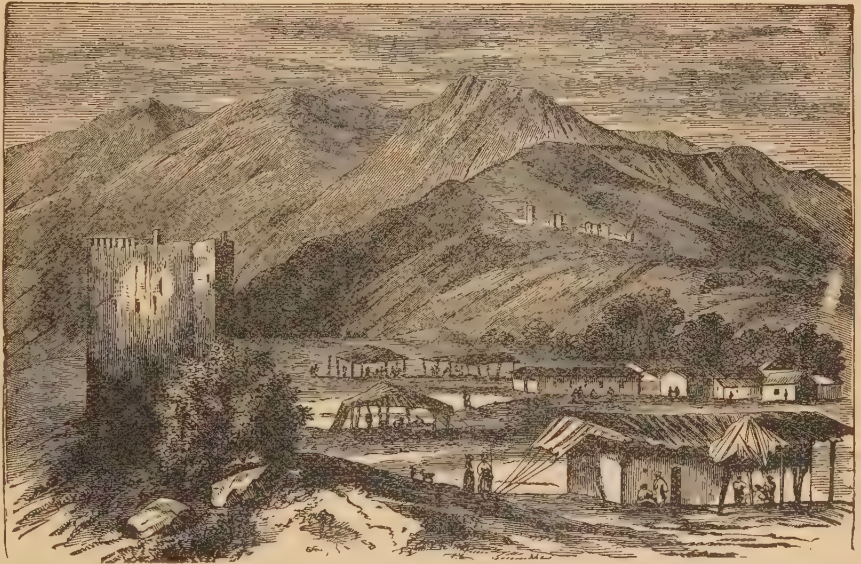
The apostles regularly went to a place used for prayer ; and a girl, who knew their custom, followed them, as they went every day, and cried after them, " These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This girl was one of a certain class of people of those days who pretended to be divinely inspired, and who might possibly have been permitted to perform some astonishing things by the aid of the devil, who seems to have had full possession of her mind. By her predictions she gained much money. It seems that she was not free, but belonged to masters who received what she gained. Paul, perceiving what kind of a person she was, was grieved at her condition, and, in the name of Jesus Christ, he commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. " And he came out the same hour."

Her masters were greatly enraged that they had now lost their gains, for the girl could serve the devil no longer. They therefore seized Paul and Silas, and carried them before the magistrates, accusing them of teaching doctrines and customs contrary to the laws. Then the magistrates had them stripped, by tearing off their clothes, and commanded them to be beaten with rods, after which they were cast into prison, and the jailer had orders to take the greatest care that they should not escape. So he thrust them " into the innermost prison "—one that, lying beyond others and having more bolts and bars, was the more secure. And still, to add to their security, he put their feet fast into heavy wood stocks, and thus they lay, as it is supposed, in the most painful position, with their sore and naked backs stretched upon the cold and dirty stones—the prisoners not sitting, as in modern times, when the stocks are used, but being compelled to occupy the most painful and unnatural position suggested by the mode of punishment.

In this situation, which would have made most men groan and weep, Paul and Silas, being comforted in their minds in an extraordinary way, sang praises to God in the middle of the night : it is thought that they sang one of David's Psalms, which is not unlikely.

“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.” The keeper awoke with the noise, and, seeing the doors open and the prisoners free, he drew his sword and would have killed himself, fearing that he should be dreadfully punished for their escape. But Paul cried out to him, “Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.” Then he called for a light, sprang in and “came trembling”; and, according to the Eastern custom of showing respect, fell down before Paul and Silas, and bringing them out of

the inner prison, he began to talk to them directly about his poor soul, and asked, “What must I do to be saved?” The apostles told him to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”; and



MODERN JERICO.

they also preached to his whole family. Then the jailer washed their stripes, which had perhaps begun to fester, and showed them every kindness. They had done good to his soul, and to the souls of his family, as well as saved his body, when he was about to destroy himself; and the least he could do for them was to show them kindness by comforting their bodies. The people’s hearts were all ready to receive the Gospel from their lips; and, having renounced their idolatries, they declared their readiness to become Christians, and were all of them baptized. Then the jailer took his prisoners into his house, and set meat before them to refresh their wearied bodies, and they all rejoiced together.



In the morning the magistrates thought that Paul and Silas had had punishment enough, and so sent orders for them to be released. But Paul, being a Roman citizen, now maintained his privilege, teaching us that Christianity is not at all opposed to our claiming and defending our civil rights—that is, those which belong to us as men and citizens. “They have beaten us openly uncondemned,” said he, “being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.” The magistrates had taken upon themselves to do what they were not authorized to do; for the magistrates were not to try prisoners, but only to see that the lawless were seized and secured and that the law was properly put into execution when the prisoners were condemned. Paul, therefore, on account of others, as well as on his own account, would not sanction such shameful proceedings; he did not, however, demand revenge upon them, though he might have got them severely punished for what they had so unjustly done, but he required that they should acknowledge themselves wrong, and, with all respect, make amends to them by fetching them out. So the magistrates, being now greatly frightened, went to the prison, and begged Paul and Silas to forgive them, and that they would leave the city as soon as possible, that nothing more might be said about the matter.

When they had quitted the prison they paid another visit to their kind hostess, Lydia, and then pursued their journey.

### **Paul Preaches at Thessalonica and is Persecuted There.**

#### **ACTS XVII, XVIII.**

Paul and Silas, having passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, both considerable cities in Macedonia, “came to Thessalonica, a free city of the same country,” where the Roman governor resided. Here there “was a synagogue of the Jews,” and during three successive Sabbaths Paul went in and reasoned with them about what the Scriptures said of the Messiah, and proved that Jesus was he. His facts and arguments were so forcible that, accompanied by the power

of the Spirit of God, many Jews and many Gentiles who had become Jews were converted.

This enraged the unbelieving Jews; and these, supposing Paul to be at the house of Jason,—one of their number whose heart had been brought to trust in Christ,—violently beset Jason's house, and dragged him on, with others, to the rulers of the city, and charged them with turning the world upside down, or throwing every place which they visited into confusion by their doctrines. The magistrates, however, acted on this occasion with great propriety, and as these Christians were accused of being troublers, they only required pledges of them that they would not in future disturb the peace of the city, but did not attempt to punish them, where they could not see they had committed any crime.

Paul and Silas, having left the city quietly during the night, proceeded next to Berea, another city in Macedonia, and there also they "went into the synagogue of the Jews." Here the gospel was readily received by the people, who heard Paul and Silas with attention, and then examined the Scriptures for themselves, to see if what was said about the Messiah agreed with the character of Jesus Christ; and so many of them became true Christians.

The Jews of Thessalonica, hearing of their success, followed them to that place, and stirred up the unthinking part of the people to disturb the apostles.

The apostle Paul was therefore sent out of the way, because against him the bitterest enmity prevailed; and Silas and Timotheus remained behind to explain things further to the young converts, who would have many questions to ask about what Jesus Christ taught and did.

Paul next went to Athens, a city in Greece, exceedingly famous for its knowledge and learning. When he arrived there his spirit was grieved and provoked to see the stupidity of the people, notwithstanding all their knowledge, for the city was full of idols: it had more images called gods than all the rest of Greece, so that one humorously said of it, it was easier to find a god there than a man. Here Paul, according to his custom, disputed with the Jews in their synagogue, and with "the devout persons," or Jewish proselytes, who

had left heathenism and embraced Judaism; and he also took every opportunity of conversing about Christ with the Athenians, whom he met in the great market-place.

In this city he was violently opposed by the heathen philosophers, called Epicureans and Stoics.

The Epicureans were so called from their first teacher, Epicurus. Though they believed there was a God, they were foolish enough to believe that the world was made by chance, and that no Providence ruled over it. See how ignorant the wisest of men were without the Scriptures! The Stoics received their name, not from their founder, whose name was Zeno, but from a Greek word, *stoæ*, which signifies a portico, or piazza, because it was customary for Zeno to walk under a portico and teach his scholars. He was wiser than the Epicureans, since he believed that God did make the world: but he, like them, denied that the Creator cared anything about it after it was made; and so, instead of being ruled by His Providence, it was left to Fate.

These were the men with whom Paul had here chiefly to contend. They were, however, disposed to hear him; for though they despised him and called him a babbler, yet, as he brought with him doctrines new to them,—and they were fond of “some new thing,”—they thought at least that they should be amused.

There was at Athens a celebrated place called the Areopagus, “in the midst of Mars’ hill.” This building was used as a court of law, and was adapted to accommodate a large concourse of people. Here it was determined that Paul should publish his opinions. It was a fine opportunity, and he embraced it.

He told them that he had observed they were very superstitious, or given to the worship of many and false gods; and that in passing through their streets he had even seen an inscription—“TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”; which perhaps meant the God of the Jews, of whom they had heard, but did not know. Now, he came to tell them who he was, and that instead of the world being made by chance, as some among them believed, he it was who made all things and all men; and whose providence, so far from not noticing the world he made,



even notices every individual, and fixes the boundaries of every man's life and the very spot where he shall reside. And as we spring from God, our spirits being breathed into us by his Spirit, nothing could be more absurd than to imagine that stone carved into different images should represent God—many of them being even unworthy to represent men, whom God has made. For a long while God had borne with this idolatry, but now Paul declared he had sent his apostles to bear witness against it, and called upon men everywhere to repent, for he has determined to judge the world, and Christ will be the judge, who is now risen from the dead.

On mentioning the subject of the resurrection the whole assembly seems to have been in a tumult. It was a doctrine either disbelieved or never thought of by the Grecian philosophers. "Some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." So, as they were not disposed to hear any more at that time, and received his message so unfavorably, Paul left them. Yet his address was not altogether useless: "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed; among which was Dionysius, the Areopagite,"—or a judge in the court of Areopagus,—“and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”

Paul next proceeded to Corinth, another Grecian city of considerable importance. Here he took up his abode with a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who had lately left Rome in consequence of a decree of the Emperor that no Jews should remain there any longer. From what is reported by historians it is supposed that this decree was made because the Jews were so violent in opposing the Christians that they caused continual disturbances. It appears that Paul and Aquila were of the same craft or trade—tent-makers; and this was one reason which brought them together. It was no disgrace among the Jews to be of a trade but rather a disgrace to be without, and therefore every one was brought up to a trade, that he might never want the means of procuring his livelihood; and so the apostle Paul, though a learned man, and brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel,—that is, as his pupil,—was nevertheless taught the craft of tent-making. Tents, in hot countries, are very common and useful, and it was

by this trade that the apostle supported himself while preaching the gospel.

While at Corinth Paul, as usual, visited and "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath"; and here he was joined by Silas and Timotheus.

The Jews having refused to hear what he had to say about Christ, Paul "shook his raiment," it being loose about him, as a sign that he would shake them off and have no more to do with them, and went to the Gentiles who were in the city. For this purpose he took up his abode at the house of a man named Justus, who, though not a Jew, was a sincere man, and worshiped the true God, having learned about him from the Jews, his house being near the synagogue. His labors were, however, not altogether useless among the Jews, for "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house." Many Corinthians also believed.

Paul was, indeed, particularly encouraged in his labors at Corinth, for God told him in a vision, "I have much people in this city." "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

The success of Paul excited the enmity of the Jews, whose rage against Christ was as bitter as it still is. They therefore rose up against Paul, and accused him before Gallio, the Roman officer who at that time presided over Achaia, in which the conquered province of Corinth was. Gallio saw their wicked rage, and told them that if Paul had done any bad thing he would have taken notice of it, but as they accused him only about religious matters, he had nothing to do with such disputes, and so he drove the Jews away from his presence. The Greeks, seeing how he treated the Jews, and knowing that they were not now in high favor, immediately fell upon Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him severely; so that the harm the Jews wanted to do to Paul now fell upon themselves; "and Gallio cared for none of these things," but looked on with total indifference.

Paul's next journey was into Syria, and he took with him Priscilla and Aquila. Then he came to Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia, where he still reasoned with the Jews by entering into their synagogue.

Having left Ephesus he landed at Cesarea, and visited the Christian church there. Thence he went to Antioch, "and after he had spent some time there he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples."

While Paul was engaged elsewhere Apollos visited Ephesus. This was a most eloquent Jew, who had been taught about Christ by John the Baptist. Here he preached boldly, urging men, no doubt, to repentance and faith in the Messiah. But Aquila and Priscilla, having been instructed by the apostle Paul, knew more than Apollos did, and they therefore assisted in showing him "the way of God more perfectly," and about Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

After this Apollos visited different parts of Achaia and strengthened the minds of those who believed in Christ, and "he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, that Jesus was the Christ."

### Paul's Extensive Travels to Preach the Gospel.

#### ACTS XIX.

In the last chapter we learned that Apollos visited different parts of Achaia, and here we are informed that he also paid a visit to Corinth, which was the capital of Achaia. During this time Paul "passed through the upper coasts," or countries to the north of Ephesus, called Phrygia, Ionia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia (see ASIA MINOR, at the end of ACTS), and then again to Ephesus. He here instructed some of John the Baptist's disciples, and baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus"; and he "spake boldly" in the synagogue "for the space of three months concerning the kingdom of God"—that is, the reign of Christ the Messiah.

However, at length he gave over instructing the Jews in this place, since their hearts were so much hardened against Christ; and "one Tyrannus" having a school of public instruction and disputation, he went there and taught his disciples about the way of salvation, and in this manner he passed two years. Ephesus being a place of great importance, and numbers of persons, both Jews and Greeks, visiting it for purposes of trade and information, the doctrines of the apostle

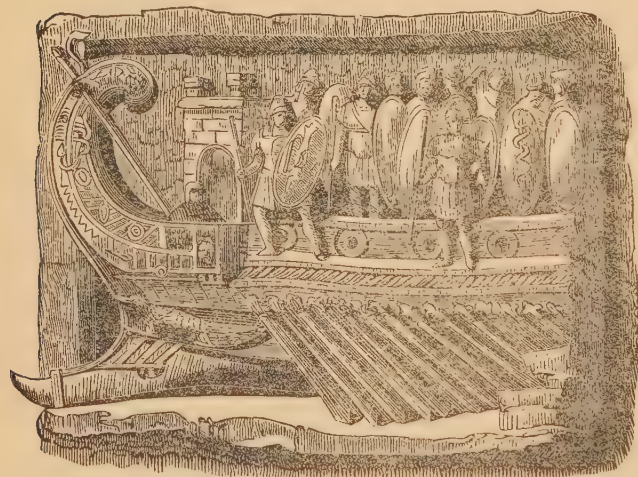


were heard by most of these, and so conveyed abroad and spread in all the cities and towns of Asia.

Seeing the wonderful things done by the apostle, some "vagabond Jews" who strolled about from place to place, like our vagabond mountebanks, to gain a livelihood by their tricks, and who were "exorcists," or a sort of conjurers, tried to do a like thing in a similar way. Among these were seven sons of a Jew, a "chief among the priests" at Ephesus; and they attempted to cast out evil spirits from those who were tormented with them, and said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." They, however, were soon proved to

be imposters, to their injury and shame, to the honor of the apostle and to the advancement of the cause of Christ.

This affair was soon spread over the city of Ephesus, and produced a great change in many persons, both among the Jews and Greeks. Indeed, "many of them which used curious arts brought their books to-



PART OF ANCIENT WAR-GALLEY.

gether, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." This was a glorious triumph over Satan in his own territories, for Ephesus was a very wicked and idolatrous city, where magic was taught, and it was a deadly blow to the wicked art when the books were destroyed by which the people had learned how to perform it. The price of the books burned has been reckoned, at the lowest rate, at about eight thousand eight hundred dollars; but some think it was not less than thirty-one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars. Books were extremely dear before the art of printing was invented, and books on curious arts were dearer than others.

The apostle Paul now began to think about visiting some other parts, and, having decided to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and thence to Jerusalem, and then to Rome, he sent forward Timotheus, or Timothy, to whom he wrote two epistles, and Erastus, who was chamberlain of the city of Corinth, as we learn in the sixteenth chapter of Romans; and so these gave notice of his visit, and collected the Christians to receive him. While the apostle was about to leave Ephesus, there was, however, "no small stir" about the religion of Jesus; for the makers of images, which the idolatrous people called gods, having lost much of their custom, endeavored to excite a tumult and to drive him out of the city.

Before we notice this affair it may be necessary just to give you a short account of this famous city of Ephesus and of its celebrated temple.

We have before said that Ephesus was the metropolis of Asia, and, indeed, it was the most famous place of trade in all Asia Minor. The ancient city stood about fifty miles south of Smyrna. It has long gone to decay, like many other once splendid cities of the East. The chief ornament of this city was the Temple of Diana, to erect which all the states in Asia were made to contribute a portion of their wealth. This temple was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It was nearly as long as St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and nearly as wide as St. Paul's at its greatest breadth. It was supported by one hundred and twenty-seven marble pillars, seventy feet high, or twelve times the height of our tallest men, and these were either most curiously carved or highly polished. From accounts given by ancient writers, this temple was two hundred and twenty years in building, and was continually improved for four hundred years. The imaginary goddess, Diana, was represented by a small statue made of ebony,—a hard, black, and valuable wood,—and the people were weak enough to believe that this piece of carved wood was sent down to them from heaven by Jupiter, a name by which they distinguished one of the heathen gods, and whom they supposed to be the father of Diana. To this statue, therefore, they paid a great deal of reverence. It had been formerly placed in the trunk of an old elm, but, from the

honors paid to it, it was at length provided with this magnificent building. All the inhabitants of Ionia went every year to Ephesus to solemnize a festival to "the great goddess Diana," and wives and children carried their offerings to her temple, many of which were exceedingly rich and valuable. Priests who officiated on this occasion were liberally maintained by the people; and the citizens, no doubt, made much money by the gathering together of so large a number of people, many of whom were wealthy, and who remained during the continuance of the sports which accompanied their offerings.

The throngs that yearly visited Ephesus furnished the silversmiths with plenty of employment to make silver models of this famed building, which the multitude so much venerated, and brought no small gain to the craftsmen. One of these silversmiths in particular, whose name was Demetrius, called together his fellow-workmen and told them of the injury they suffered by the reduced sale of their silver temples, in consequence of the apostle Paul having "almost throughout all Asia persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands." And Demetrius showed that the temple itself was in danger of falling into contempt and neglect, owing to the success of the apostle's preaching. His interested auditors felt the force of what he said, and "they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Their noise and shouting roused the whole city, and, having put many others in a rage against the apostle's preaching, the mob caught Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's companions, and rushed with them into the theater, where public plays were acted in honor of the goddess, and where, among other things, men were set to fight with wild beasts; and very probably it was intended to hurry the servants of Christ thither to throw them to the wild beasts.

Paul, not in the least afraid, would have followed them into the theater to preach the gospel even to this enraged multitude; but the Christians at Ephesus advised him not to expose himself to danger, and probably thought the people were not in a mind to attend to anything he might say.

When the people were got together in the theater a great many of



them did not know why they were there, and as one asked another what was the matter, all were in confusion.

In the meantime Alexander, who was a professed Christian, was dragged into the theater, the Jews helping to push him in, and so uniting in their wicked deeds with the Ephesian idolaters. Here Alexander would have defended his faith, but when he attempted to speak the mob drowned his voice, and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" They knew that they could say nothing in their own defense in reply to Alexander, and so for two hours he tried in vain to speak and they roared out against him.

At length "the town clerk" interfered. (This was a person of some influence and authority; and he hit upon a very good method to restore quietness.) "Why," said he, "you know that everybody worships the goddess Diana—there is no need to dispute about that; and you know that her image came down from Jupiter, and as nobody can contradict it, what need is there of all this noise?" (This is just what he would have said in English, for his words are to the same purport.) "Besides," he added, "these men have done no harm to our goddess; they have neither robbed the temple of her wealth nor said anything that I know of against her dignity. However, if they have done any harm, the law is ready to appeal to; but if they have not, the injury will fall upon your own heads for disturbing the peace and making this terrible uproar; and if you do not immediately depart quietly home you will all be in danger of being taken up as rioters." Having spoken to this effect, the people grew a little cool, and, seeing that they could do nothing to stop the doctrines of the apostle, and might injure themselves, they quietly departed to their homes. The foolishness of their proceeding was thus quickly made very apparent to the idolatrous multitude. In fact, there is nothing that can be made to appear so ridiculous, even to the least reflective mind, as the enmity that would overcome truth by the merest outcry and passion.

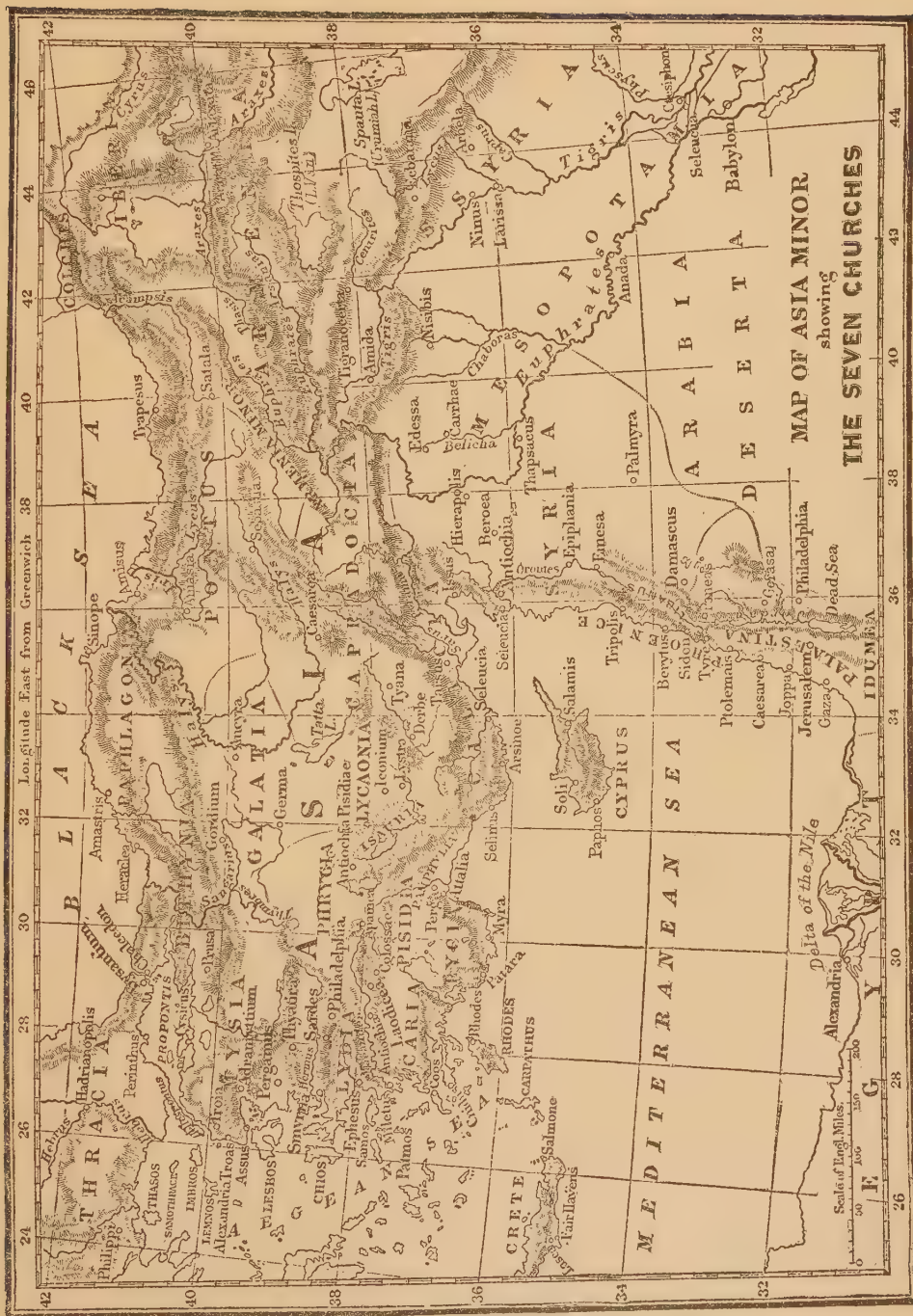
**Paul's Travels and Preaching.—His Arrest and Trial at Jerusalem.—  
Taken to Cesarea and Pleads in his own Defense**

ACTS XX—XXVI.

We have now to follow the apostle Paul rapidly through some more of his travels; and, except a few occasional remarks, shall merely notice the places where he went, so as to explain their situation and importance, if they have not been noticed before.

Paul, having taken leave of the disciples at Ephesus, now went into Macedonia, and, having visited the disciples there,—at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, of which we have lately read,—“he came into Greece,” or, as some think, Achaia. Here he remained three months, and was preparing to sail for Syria, when he heard that the Jews were watching for him to kill him if he went in that direction; and so he resolved not needlessly to put himself into danger, but returned by land through Macedonia to visit the churches there. He was now accompanied into Asia by Sopater, of Berea, and Luke, the writer of the Acts, who includes himself as one of the party when he speaks of “us”; and Aristarchus and Secundus, of Thessalonica, and Gaius, of Derbe, and Timothy and Tychicus and Trophimus, of Asia, went on to prepare matters for the apostle's reception at Troas. They sailed from Philippi, as the apostle had intended to do, and it being a short way they reached Troas in five days. The apostle, however, was not many hours behind them, since he joined them there and spent a Sabbath with them; and they remained there altogether but seven days.

The companions of Paul now took passage in a ship to go from Troas to Assos, a city of Asia by the seaside; and here the apostle, having traveled on foot, shortly joined them; when, having been taken into the ship, they sailed for Mitylene, a city in Lesbos, an island situated in the Ægean Sea, now known by the name of the Archipelago, being that part of the Mediterranean Sea which divides Greece from Asia Minor. Thence they continued their course “over against Chios,” another island in the Ægean Sea, and the next day they







reached Samos, another island in the same sea, and anchored or stopped at Trogyllium, a small island near Samos, for there was a bay here convenient for vessels to anchor in; and the next day they came to Miletus, the chief city of Ionia. On his way to this place Paul passed by Ephesus, for he had determined to sail past it, "because he would not spend the time in Asia," wishing to be at Jerusalem at the great feast of Pentecost, that he might have an opportunity of preaching the gospel to a great number of Jews, out of all countries, whom he knew would come to that feast.

Miletus being only about twelve miles from Ephesus, the apostle sent for the elders or managing members of the church in that city, and he most affectionately addressed them, urging them to hold fast their profession of faith in Christ; and he told them this was the last time he should see them, for he knew that he was about to go where he must become a great sufferer and a prisoner for the sake of the Lord Jesus, for whom he was even willing to lay down his life; "and then he kneeled down and prayed with them all." We are not told what his prayer was; but we may readily suppose that it was one of the most earnest, affectionate, and tender prayers that was ever offered up to God, for he seemed to love the Ephesians most sincerely, and was deeply concerned for their happiness; "and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." In this way Esau fell on Jacob's neck, and Joseph on his brother Benjamin's; it was, as you have heard before, the Eastern way of showing great affection.

Having parted with these elders, who accompanied Paul to the ship, and did not leave him till the very last moment, he and his companions sailed straight for Coos, or Cos, another island in the Ægean Sea, and the day following they reached Rhodes, a celebrated island, which had a city of the same name. Here was that famous statue called the Colossus of Rhodes, which cost twelve years of the sculptor's labor and \$528,000. Its height was seventy cubits, or 105 feet. It was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. As it lay along it astonished all beholders, for few men with their arms stretched out could embrace the thumb.

They next proceeded to a place called Patara, a city of Lycia,

which was a country of Asia Minor, bounded on the south by the Mediterranean. Here they found a ship for Phœnicia, and thither they sailed, and passing Cyprus stood for Syria, and landed at Tyre, the chief city of Phœnicia. Having met with some Christians here, they stayed to establish them in their faith, and were with them seven days.

Then they sailed from Tyre to Ptolemais, a city of Galilee, on the seacoast, where they remained with some fellow-Christians during one day. And the day following Paul's company stopped at Cesarea, "and entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist,"—undoubtedly the same who had baptized the eunuch,—and there they took up their abode while they remained in that place. It is worthy of remark that Philip had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy, or were inspired by the Holy Spirit to foretell events which should happen to the Church of Christ.

While the apostolical travelers were at Cesarea the prophet Agabus arrived from Judea, and foretold the treatment Paul would meet with from the Jews at Jerusalem; at the same time, taking the girdle which fastened Paul's robes around his body, he expressed it by the significant sign of binding his own hands and feet. This made Paul's companions weep and entreat him not to go to Jerusalem; but the holy servant of God, bent upon the conversion of men, would not be dissuaded from his purpose on so important an occasion, when thousands of Jews would be collected together at the feast, and he answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Shortly after this the party took their carriages—or, rather, "their baggage"—and went to Jerusalem, accompanied by some disciples of Cesarea and one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, who happened to reside at Jerusalem and who accommodated them at his house.

When Paul visited the temple the Jews "laid hands on him," and treated him so cruelly that they would have killed him had not the Roman commandant rushed in among them with some soldiers and rescued him. He, however, supposed from their treating Paul in this



manner that he might have been doing something wrong, and ordered him to be bound with chains, and so the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled.

Paul was now, with some difficulty, carried prisoner to the castle, for the Jews still pressed upon him to murder him. Here he conversed with the commandant, who fancied he might be an Egyptian robber that had done much mischief, and, accompanied by four thousand desperate men, had lately troubled the neighboring country. Paul then informed him that he was mistaken, for he was a citizen of Tarsus, no mean city in Cilicia, and begged to be allowed to address the people, which he did as he stood on the steps of the ascent to the castle. He then told them that he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel," a learned Jew—that is, he sat to receive his instructions, as scholars then sat beneath their masters; that he had been as zealous as any Jew could be in behalf of his religion, but that he was converted on his way to Damascus, as he was going to persecute the Christians; and that now he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to preach to the Gentiles. This they could not bear, for they fancied themselves to be the only people whom God would honor with a divine message; and now again they broke out into a rage and tumult. The chief captain then ordered Paul to be scourged; but while they were binding him he said he was a Roman citizen, and it was a great crime to scourge such a person without a trial. Tarsus was a free city, and Paul's parents being citizens of Tarsus, he was born free; so Paul escaped being scourged, and the captain was greatly frightened that he had even bound him, for it was also a great offense against the Roman law to bind a Roman citizen.

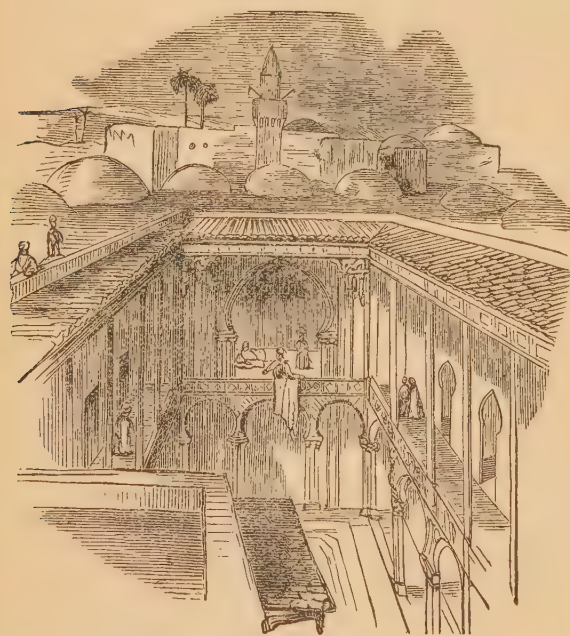
On the morrow Paul was taken before the chief priests and council, or Jewish Sanhedrim. While he was attempting to address them, the high priest, Ananias, commanded some to give him a slap in the face, which the apostle resented as a violation of the law, and called the priest a whited wall, meaning that he was a hypocrite, looking fair without but bad within. The Jews then reproved him for reviling God's high priest, when he acknowledged that he would not have done it, but he was not aware that he was the high priest.

The apostle, finding that the Jews would not hear him, wisely be-  
thought himself to divide his enemies among themselves; and as one  
thing which had offended the Jews was his preaching the resurrection  
of Jesus, he called out that he was brought there for professing his  
hope in the resurrection of the dead. Now, the Sadducees denied  
that there was any resurrection, but the Pharisees believed it, and  
immediately, as Paul had foreseen, they fell out among themselves;

and the Scribes in the council,  
who were Pharisees, declared  
that Paul was unjustly accused.

As the parties became vio-  
lent, Paul's life was in danger  
amongst them, and the chief  
captain, now fearing the con-  
sequences of his being injured  
as a Roman citizen, commanded  
the soldiers again to rescue him  
and take him into the castle.  
Here Jesus appeared to him in  
a vision, and told him he must  
preach his gospel yet at Rome.

Above forty of the Jews, en-  
raged at the deliverance of the  
apostle, now took a solemn  
oath that they would neither



UPPER CHAMBERS IN ORIENTAL HOUSE.

eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, and they proposed to the chief  
priests and elders that if they would make an excuse to have him once  
more before the council they would take care that he should not again  
escape alive. However, God defeated their wicked purpose, for, pro-  
videntially, a sister of Paul's had a son at Jerusalem, who, having  
learned the intended plot of these men, went himself and informed the  
apostle, who sent him to tell the chief captain. The captain then lost  
no time to protect him, but ordered a body of soldiers to take him at  
night to Cesarea, a place which was seventy-five miles from Jerusalem,  
and where Felix resided, who was governor of Judea. The captain,

whose name was Claudius Lysias, also sent a favorable letter to Felix, which you may read in the twenty-third chapter.

At Cesarea Paul was kept for five days in "Herod's judgment hall," or court for holding trials. At the end of this time Ananias, the high priest, and the elders had traveled from Jerusalem, accompanied by an orator, or sort of counsellor, named Tertullus, for the purpose of prosecuting Paul. Tertullus, appearing in court, delivered a very flattering speech to Felix, and then accused Paul of being "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of seditions," and "a ringleader of the Nazarenes," a name of contempt given by the Jews to the Christians, derived from Jesus being brought up at Nazareth. Paul, in reply, defended himself with great eloquence, and his speech agreed with what the captain had said about him in his letter. Felix would not, therefore, hastily condemn him, but put off the business till he had inquired and thought more about it, and had seen the chief captain, who could more particularly explain what he knew of the matter. In the meantime he ordered a centurion to keep guard over Paul, but allowed him to go unfettered and to see any of his friends.

Some days afterward, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, he sent for Paul and had some private conversation with him "concerning the faith in Christ." His wife was a Jewess, the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who was eaten by worms, and sister of the king called Agrippa; and probably Felix wished to satisfy his curiosity and that of his wife about the new faith, which she could better understand than he, knowing something about the prophecies of the Messiah. Paul's reasoning was most powerful; and while he took this opportunity of striking at some vices which he knew had disgraced the character of Felix, and showed him that, though a ruler himself, he must be judged at last for all his crimes before the Judge of the whole earth, the guilty "Felix trembled," and then put off the conversation for another opportunity; but he lulled his conscience to rest and never met Paul again, except on common matters, when he hoped he might in some manner bribe him to gain his liberty.

In this unjust way was Paul kept a prisoner during two years, when Porcius Festus was appointed governor of Judea in the room of Felix.



Felix did not even then set the apostle at liberty, but left Paul bound, to please the Jews. This was, however, of no advantage to him, for he was himself accused by some of the Jews of oppressive conduct, and taken before Cesar to answer for his own real offenses; and had it not been that he had a brother named Pallas, who had great influence in the court, he would have been severely punished.

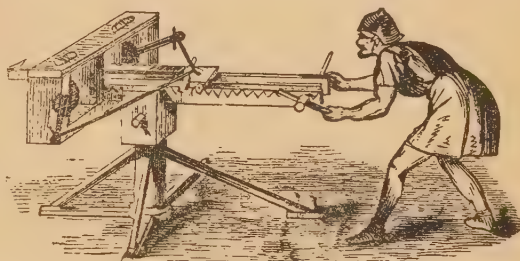
The new governor, Festus, arriving at Jerusalem, the Jews had great hopes that they should now accomplish their wicked purposes against Paul; and "the high priest and chief of the Jews" even begged it as a favor of Festus that he would send Paul back to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem to be tried, where they would not have failed to have murdered him. Festus, however, thought he would first go to Cesarea and inquire into the merits of the case, and he wished the Jews to accompany him thither and bring forward their charges against Paul. On reaching Cesarea he took his seat as judge, and the apostle was brought before him; but his accusers were not able to prove anything against him. Notwithstanding this, the wicked governor, who ought to have set him free, proposed, after all, to send him before the Sanhedrim, wishing by so doing to gratify the great persons among the Jews. Paul, however, again took shelter under his rights as a Roman citizen, and demanded that he should at once go before the emperor,—Nero, then in the seventh year of his reign,—which completely defeated the malicious schemes of his adversaries and left no means of evasion for Festus.

Agrippa, who ruled over the northeastern portion of Palestine, with the title of king, and his sister Bernice, came over to pay a visit to Festus and congratulate him on his new dignity. Festus told Agrippa how much he was perplexed about Paul; that he had been tried before him and appeared to be an innocent man; but that, as the matters in dispute were chiefly things which concerned the Jews, and which he did not well understand, he had wished to have sent him before the Sanhedrim, but Paul had resolved to appeal to Cesar.

Agrippa, being a Jew, had his curiosity excited, and wished to examine Paul himself; so he was, on the next day, brought before the public court, where Agrippa and Festus and Bernice and all "the

chief captains and principal men of the city " were assembled together. Festus then openly declared his opinion of Paul's innocence ; but since he had appealed to Cesar, he said he must now send him to Rome, but he really did not know what to say to the emperor as an excuse for sending him thither. He had, therefore, assembled this court for advice, and especially wished for that of Agrippa, an illustrious person, and who was capable of entering better into the matters in dispute.

After Festus had spoken Agrippa told Paul he might speak ; when the apostle again eloquently pleaded his own cause, stated his early life, his conversion, his mission to the Gentiles, his sufferings from the Jews, and the doctrines which he preached. At length he was suddenly interrupted by Festus, who said, with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." To whom Paul replied that he was perfectly in his senses, and his doctrines were the words of truth. The apostle also so closely pressed his address upon Agrippa that he forced him to cry out, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul said to the king, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."



ANCIENT WAR-ENGINE.

After breaking up the council Agrippa told Festus that if Paul had not appealed to Cesar he should certainly have advised his being set at liberty, for he was without doubt an innocent man.

## Paul's Dangerous Voyage to Rome.—His Miracles at Melita.

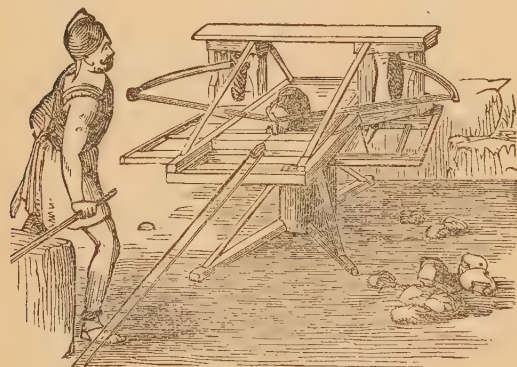
ACTS XXVII, XXVIII.

Paul was now given in charge of Julius, a Roman centurion, and sent on board a ship of Adramyttium to sail for Rome. Adramyttium was a seaport town in Mysia, a part of the province of Asia.

He was accompanied in his voyage by a Christian brother named Aristarchus. They touched at Sidon, a famous city of Phœnicia, where Paul having some friends, Julius handsomely allowed him permission to go and visit them. Thence they sailed under the island of Cyprus and crossed the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and then came to Myra, a city of Lycia. Here the centurion found a ship of Alexandria which was bound for Italy. Alexandria was the chief city of Egypt, built by Alexander the Great immediately after his conquest of Egypt, and it was peopled with Greeks. It had many magnificent buildings and a library—built by Ptolemy Philadelphus, one of the kings of Egypt—containing 700,000 volumes, which was, unfortunately,

burnt in a war between Julius Cæsar, who was the Roman dictator, and Pompey, a great Roman general.

In order to make a short cut to Italy, the master of the ship now stood toward Cnidus, a place in Asia Minor; but the wind being contrary, he altered his course, and so sailed below Crete, one of the noblest isles in the Mediterranean Sea, which is now better known



ANCIENT WAR-ENGINE FOR THROWING STONES.

by the name of Candia, and then he passed over against Salmone, known latterly by the name of Cape Salmone, a piece of land in the island of Crete. They next came to a place called the Fair Havens, near Lasea, a city on the seashore of Crete.

Having lost much time in sailing slowly against the wind or stopping at the Fair Havens, the captain wished to proceed on his voyage, although the time of the year was now very unfavorable. Paul advised the centurion not to proceed, for there was great danger; but the captain persisted, and in the end found he had done wrong in not taking the apostle's advice. Rash people have often to repent of not taking kind and wise advice, when it is too late.

As the haven was not commodious to winter in, they proceeded on



their course toward Phenice, a haven of Crete, having a favorable wind. In a short time, however, the wind changed, and "a tempestuous wind" blew, "called Euroclydon." Here the ship, becoming unmanageable, was left to the mercy of the wind, and she ran under an island called Clauda. Fearing they should be wrecked, with some difficulty they secured their boat to go ashore; and they passed ropes and chains round about the ship to keep her from going to pieces, and they took down their sails, and so were driven about in the sea, wherever the wind might bear them, having only what the sailors call bare poles.

Still the tempest increased, and it was found necessary to throw everything burdensome overboard to lighten the ship, that she might the more easily float on the tossing waves. The sailors, in that age, steered their course by the sun, moon, and stars; but the skies were so darkened by this storm, and that for many days, that they could see none of the heavenly bodies, and therefore knew not whither they went; and in this uncertain state they gave themselves up for lost, expecting that the ship must at last strike on rocks or quicksands.

While they were all in a state of despair, God showed Paul, in a vision, that he should not perish by the storm, but should yet bear witness to his truth before Cesar at Rome. Then Paul told his companions that they would have acted wisely had they taken his advice; however, now they must be shipwrecked, but their lives would all be saved.

On the fourteenth night the seamen found, by sounding, that they were approaching some land, and so to prevent being wrecked they cast anchor. In sounding, a weight, attached to a rope, is cast into the sea, and by the depth to which it sinks, as indicated by the marks or knots on the rope, the sailors know whether they are near land. The iron anchor, whose shape every one knows, is attached to a heavy rope cable and thrown into the sea, and its flukes burying themselves in the sandy or gravelly bottom of the sea, it holds the ship, so that it can not be easily moved from its place or drift upon the rocks or sand. In this case four anchors were cast, to hold the ship the more firmly.

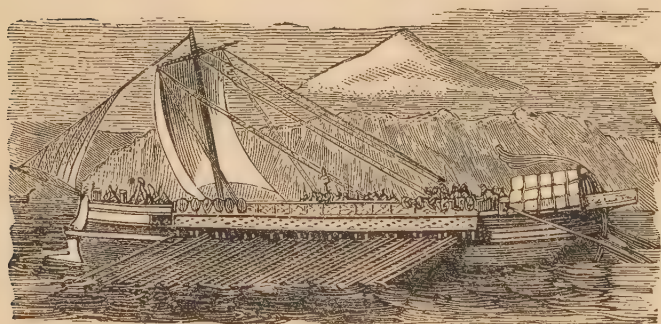
The sailors now attempted to escape for their lives, and were steal-

ing off with the boat, when Paul declared that their continuance was absolutely necessary to save the rest; so the soldiers cut the rope by which the boat was tied to the ship and let it go, that the sailors might not get into it.

They had now all fasted a long time, and the apostle urged them to eat before the ship was wrecked, and to gather a little strength for the toils they would have to undergo; and then he solemnly gave God thanks before them all, and began himself to eat. We ought never to take our food without giving God thanks; for, as good Mr. Henry says, we can not put a morsel of food into our mouths till God first puts it into our hands.

The number of the crew and passengers was 276. Having satisfied

their appetites, the last thing which they could do to lighten the ship was to throw away the wheat and provisions; this they now did.



WAR-GALLEY IN BIBLE TIMES.

At daylight they saw a little creek of water, with a shore, and taking up the anchor, hoisted a sail and tried to run the

ship in. In doing this they ran upon some sands where two seas met, and the fore part stuck fast, but the hinder part was broken by the furious waves.

The soldiers now proposed to kill the prisoners lest any of them should escape and they should be answerable for them, and the apostle Paul was to have been killed among the rest. But the centurion, who by this time greatly respected Paul, opposed the wicked, cruel, and ungrateful scheme; he therefore ordered those who could swim to escape to the shore, and that the others should ride on boards and broken pieces of timber from the ship, and escape the best way they could; and so they all got "safe to land."

The place at which they landed was called Melita, which has gener-

ally been supposed to be the island now called Malta. Here the natives, though uncivilized, showed the shipwrecked mariners a great deal of kindness; and as it was rainy and they were fatigued and cold, they made a fire to warm them. As all helped to gather wood for it, Paul had also gathered a bundle, and while he was laying it on the fire a viper came out of it, being driven by the heat, and fastened upon his hand. The bite of this serpent is exceedingly venomous and its poison the most dangerous. The natives, being very superstitious, thought that this was a judgment on Paul, whom they took for some murderer God was now punishing, though he had escaped shipwreck. Paul shook off the reptile into the fire, and they all looked on expecting to see him fall down dead; but when they saw he had received no hurt, they then looked upon him as no less than a god.

This island had a governor named Publius, who very hospitably received the unfortunate strangers. But his hospitality was well repaid; for the father of Publius, laying at the time sick of a fever, Paul "prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him." As soon as this was known many applied for and obtained a cure, and so the apostle and his companions were much respected during their stay, and received help for their voyage.

Here they remained during three months, when they sailed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle. They next landed at Syracuse, a famous city in Sicily, where they stopped three days. They then sailed round Sicily and came to Rhegium, a city in Calabria; thence to Puteoli, a large seaport town not far from where Naples now stands; here Paul met with some Christian brethren, and stayed seven days with them—Julius, most probably, kindly consenting to gratify their wishes that Paul might so stay. Thence they went to Appii Forum, which was fifty miles from Rome, and to which place some of the Christians of Rome, hearing of their approach, went to meet the apostle, as others did also at the Three Taverns, which was thirty miles from Rome. The sight of these Christians greatly encouraged Paul's heart, for he was glad to see they were not ashamed of him as a prisoner for the cause of Christ.



On arriving at Rome Paul was allowed to have an apartment to himself, that he might not be annoyed by the common prisoners; perhaps he owed this favor to the kindness of Julius, the centurion, who had behaved toward him very handsomely throughout his whole voyage. He had, however, a soldier with him, and according to the Roman custom this man was constantly chained to the apostle, as men are handcuffed together in our country.

Here Paul sent for the Jews at Rome, and told them how unjustly he had been treated by their brethren and how he had been obliged to appeal to Cesar; and he informed them about Christ, the true Messiah; and finding them disposed to hear him he met many that visited him and instructed them in the Gospel, and numbers of them believed in Jesus. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

In these facts we have constantly presented to our minds the faithfulness of this great and valiant worker in the establishment of Christianity; and therein, too, are reminded of the similar energy and steadfastness of others of the apostles, shown in their unconcern for the threatenings and persecutions directed against them. It seems truly wonderful that those who were selected to do the work of the Master were not only inspired and strengthened for it, but were also filled with a boldness that shrank not from the face of kings and emperors and turned not away from the gaze of death. This especially appears in the case of several who, unlike Paul, seemed influenced by ignorance and temerity.

# THE EPISTLES

ARE letters, either to particular persons or churches; or are what are sometimes called "circular letters" to the churches in general. It is believed they were all written by Apostles; and, indeed, each has the name of an Apostle affixed to it, excepting that to the Hebrews and the two ascribed to John. Paul is named as the writer of thirteen of them. The Epistles were certainly divinely inspired. The churches, in the early times, received them as the word of God; and neither heretics nor opposers of the ancient churches denied that they were the genuine writings of the Apostles and the plain truths of Christianity. All the Epistles, excepting the several mentioned above, begin with the names of the writer and of those to whom the Epistle is addressed; then follows the salutation, then the letter, and then the individual messages. It is everywhere agreed to that this part of the New Testament shows the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies even more than what is called the historical part. These Epistles also contain a number of wonderful prophecies, thus proving that they were inspired by our God, who alone sees the end from the beginning.

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## The Epistle to the Romans.



HIS Epistle is placed first in the list of the Epistles, probably because Rome was a place of very great importance; but the Epistles to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and the first Epistle to Timothy, that to Titus, and perhaps some others, were all written before it.

It is generally thought that the Apostle Paul had never seen the Roman Christians when he wrote to them, but he felt a great interest in them; and they must have loved him very much for it, for they traveled from thirty to fifty miles from that city to meet him when he was going as a prisoner there.

You are not to suppose from the title that the people to whom this Epistle was written were native Romans, some of them were so, and were converted from heathenism; but they were merely persons dwelling in Rome, most of whom were converted Jews. The Apostle calls them neither Jews nor Romans, but addressed them as "all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints."

The chief design of this Epistle was to show these dwellers at Rome, and us, how a poor sinner may be justified or accounted righteous and

good in the sight of God. Then, as in the other Epistles, after having explained the grand subject he had in his mind, he exhorts the Christians to practise various duties. These duties are named frequently in his various Epistles, and are such as obedience to parents and rulers, respect to ministers, kindness and charity toward one another, and love to all saints.

### The First and Second Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians.

Corinth has been noticed when we treated on the Acts. It was a

large and crowded city, and the capital or chief city of Achaia; and Achaia was a province of Greece. The apostle Paul was at this place about two years, and, having converted many Jews and Gentiles, and left them united together in a Christian church, he now wrote to them to correct some wrong things which he heard were practised among them.

Corinth was celebrated for its games, called the Isthmian games, because the place itself stood on an isthmus, or neck of land joining two larger bodies of land, as we are told in the geographies. These



BRAZEN LAVER.

games were practised every fourth year. There were other games of a similar kind celebrated in Greece, called the Olympic, Pythean, and Nemæan. Those who engaged in these games were trained for twelve months before; and they had suitable food and exercise, to prevent them from growing too fat or too indolent, and so becoming unfit to endure the hardships they had to undergo; for they



had to run, to wrestle, to leap, and to box. The boxers used their arms, frequently beating the air, as if they were beating their opponents, that so they might be skilful and strong. The path of the racers was marked out by white lines or posts; he who did not keep within them, though he was first at the goal, or winning post, lost the prize. Garlands or crowns made of leaves of pine, olive, laurel, or parsley were given to the conquerors by the judges appointed to decide who had won; and other honors and privileges belonged to them. Large numbers of spectators were present to see these games, which drew as much attention in Greece as the greatest sights do among us.

The apostle Paul often alludes to these games, to show how much the Christian should struggle, by prayer, self-denial, and other means, against sin in order to obtain superior honors. So you will, from knowing what has been here mentioned about them, understand his meaning in many parts of his Epistles where otherwise it would not have appeared quite plain. The following texts are among those in which the apostle alludes to these games: 1 Cor. ix, 24; Gal. v, 7; Phil. ii, 16; iii, 13, 14; Heb. xii, 1.

### The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians.

Galatia was a province of Asia Minor, and this Epistle was not written to the inhabitants of any particular city or town, but to the Christians in the whole province. It is not certain by whom their several churches were founded, but it is thought probable that they were founded by the apostle. The reason why the Epistle was written was this: some converted Jews had joined the Galatians, and, not having a clear knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, had taught them they must, in becoming Christians, attend to some things which were peculiar to the religion of the Jews. Now, as Christ had done away with all the rites of the Jewish Church,—which were only shadows or types and figures of the spiritual worship of his new church,—this was a great mistake, and the apostle wrote to correct it.

### The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

Some account of the city of Ephesus has been given in the remarks on the nineteenth chapter of the Acts. The apostle Paul went to this city after he had been at Corinth, but he made only a short stay. The next time he visited it he found twelve disciples, and made many more. He continued two or three years, and formed a Christian church, to whom this Epistle was written. The apostle foresaw that teachers of untruths would spring up after his death, and his design in writing to the Ephesians was to fix their minds in the pure truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians.

You read something about Philippi in the commentary on the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Philippi was a Roman colony, which had, for several reasons, received great favors from the Roman emperors and senate. It was situated in Macedonia, a country near Greece. The Gospel was first preached here by the apostle Paul. The design of this Epistle was to exhort the Philippians to live in love toward one another, and to comfort them under those troubles which they were called to endure from the persecutors of the Christians.

### The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians.

Colosse was a city in Asia Minor, which perished by an earthquake with several other cities. Soon after this Epistle was written a new city was built on its ruins. It is not known how the Christian faith reached this place, and it is thought by some that the apostle Paul was not known there in person, because in the second chapter and first verse he seems to imply that they had not seen his face in the flesh; but this language is not quite certain, and does not exactly state any such thing. Some, therefore, think that the apostle Paul did preach here, for during three years that he dwelt at Ephesus he employed himself with so much zeal and diligence that we are told in the nine-

teenth chapter of the Acts that "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." This, like some of the Epistles, is chiefly written to warn against making mistakes in religion and to encourage to constancy in the profession of faith in Christ. It is to be noticed that this Epistle and that to the Ephesians are very much alike, from which it is thought that they were both written at the same time, while the same inspired thoughts were fresh in the mind of the apostle.

### The First and Second Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians.

Thessalonica was a very large and flourishing city, where trade was free, and the capital of Macedonia. The place is now called Salonica. Here the apostle came after he had been at Philippi, and stayed there about three weeks, and preached every Sabbath day. Many Jews, Greeks, and chief women of the place readily received the glad tidings of salvation which he declared, and the foundation was laid of a Gospel church. The wicked Jews, who despised the apostle's message, raised a mob and assaulted the house of Jason, where Paul and Silas were, and they were sent away for safety by night out of the city. Timothy was soon after sent by the apostles to comfort and instruct the converts at this city. He was pleased with what he saw, and took back to the apostle a report of the faith and charity which appeared among the Thessalonians. The apostle then wrote the First Epistle, and some months afterward he also wrote a second, comforting the Christians in their troubles and urging them to hold fast their profession.



THE RIVER JORDAN NEAR ITS SOURCE.



## The First and Second Epistles of Paul to Timothy.

Timothy was remarkable for his early piety and acquaintance with the Scriptures. The apostle in writing to him says: "From a child thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Timothy's mother, Eunice, was a Jewess, and his father was a Greek. When in his travels the apostle Paul came from Antioch the second time to Lystra, Timothy was so warmly recommended to him by the church in that place that he took him with him as a traveling companion. He was set apart for the work of an Evangelist, in order to be a fellow-laborer with Paul in preaching the Gospel. The apostle evidently had a tender regard for him, and these Epistles were written to him to give him useful advice in the work of the ministry.

## The Epistle of Paul to Titus.

Titus was a Greek, to whom the apostle Paul had been the honored messenger of preaching the Gospel, and he had not received it in vain. Paul dearly loved him, and employed him much in assisting him to do his work; we read of his sending him to Corinth, to finish a collection there to assist the poor saints at Jerusalem, and to Dalmatia, to inquire after the saints there and to comfort them. We do not read in the apostle's history that he ever was at Crete, but from this Epistle it is thought that he was, for he says to Titus, "I left thee at Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders, or ministers, in every city, as I had appointed thee." Crete is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, and is now called Candia. This island has a considerable number of inhabitants, and is remarkable for producing no ferocious or poisonous creature. This Epistle was evidently written to teach Titus how to choose good men for pastors, and how to act himself as a minister of Jesus Christ.

### The Epistle of Paul to Philemon.

This is a very short but a very interesting Epistle. It is, in fact, a story about Onesimus, a converted slave, who ran away from his master Philemon, whom some think he robbed, and then went to Rome, where he heard the apostle Paul preach, when his heart was changed. The kind apostle then wrote this most tender Epistle to Philemon, whom he knew, begging him to take his slave back into his service, for Onesimus was now become a truly good man, and what loss Philemon had sustained by his absence, the apostle assured him he was quite ready to pay. It is supposed that Philemon lived at Colosse.



SYRIAN TENTS.

### The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews.

This does not bear the name of the apostle Paul, but, if not written by him, it manifests much of his spirit. The design of writing it was to explain to them—the converted Hebrews, or Jews—the superiority of Christ to Moses, to Joshua, or Aaron; to prove that in his priesthood and death all the work of the priests was completed; that he had made a perfect offering for sin; and that from henceforth there was no other way in which salvation could be expected but through Christ.

### The General Epistle of James.

The Epistle of James is called "general" because it was not written to any particular person. It was addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." These were not Christian Jews scattered abroad by persecution, but Jews who had been scattered over all countries by the captivity, numbers of whom never returned, in consequence of Cyrus' decree, but remained among the Gentiles. The author of this Epistle is thought to be James, the brother of Jude, known by the name of James the Less, probably because he was less in stature or younger than James, the son of Zebedee, who was slain by Herod. Some of the Jews here addressed were pious men and some not. This is clear from the different sorts of address which we find in the Epistle, some consoling and comforting, others warning and rebuking.

### The First and Second Epistles General of Peter.

These Epistles, like that of James, were addressed to scattered Jews, "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." These might include some remains of the ten tribes carried captive by the Assyrians and of the two tribes carried captive by the Babylonians; but more especially are the Epistles addressed to suffering Christians, chiefly converted Jews and some Gentiles, who were scattered abroad in the early persecutions of the Christian Church.

The apostle Peter was more especially sent to minister to the Jews, as the apostle Paul was to the Gentiles; and Peter, meeting with a faithful brother, Silvanus, who had been the companion of Paul, takes an opportunity of sending a letter by him, chiefly addressed to the converted Jews dispersed among the Gentile countries where he with Paul and others traveled, the design of which was to show that both taught the same glorious doctrines. This was the First Epistle.

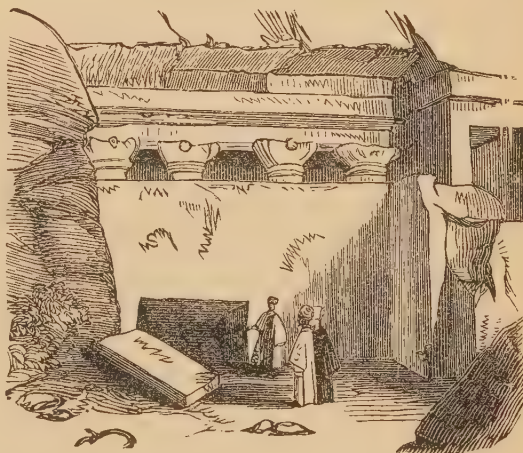
The Second Epistle was to urge those to whom the apostle wrote to be anxious after divine knowledge, to fix their minds on the Gospel,



to guard them against teachers that would instruct them in error, and to warn them of the approaching end of all things.

### The First Epistle General of John.

The author of this Epistle was John, the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved ; he was the youngest of the apostles and survived them all. The design of writing it was to promote brotherly love, to warn against doctrines that allowed men to live in sin, and to give clear notions of the nature of God and of the divine glory of Jesus Christ. There is an anecdote of this apostle worthy of being remembered, both by young and old, whom the venerable John was used to address alike by the tender names of little children. It is said in some early histories that he spent his last days at Ephesus, where he died ; and that when he was too old to walk he was carried to the place of worship in the arms of some of the disciples. He could then only speak a few words very feebly, and these words always were, " Little children, love one another."



SEPULCHRAL CAVE IN JERUSALEM.

### The Second Epistle of John.

This, you see, is not called "general." It was written to a pious lady. The object of it was to urge this pious lady to hold fast her Christian faith, to avoid error, and to love God and those who loved him.

### The Third Epistle of John.

This Epistle was to a particular person also. His name was Gaius or Caius, and, most likely, the same mentioned by the apostle Paul for

his kindness in receiving and lodging and entertaining good people. See the sixteenth chapter of Romans, near the end. In this Epistle John speaks of one "Diotrephes," who was a very haughty man, which was not a proper mark of a Christian, and of one "Demetrius," who had a good report of all men, as every Christian should have, as far as respects his life, temper, and behavior. The former he mentions that Gaius may not imitate him, and the latter he holds up as an excellent example. We should always imitate the example of the truly wise and good.

### The General Epistle of Jude.

This is also an epistle written to no particular person, but chiefly designed for the Jews who believed in Jesus Christ. Jude, or rather Judas, was the son of Alpheus, and brother of James the Less, or the younger. He was also called Lebbeus and Thaddeus, for it was a frequent custom in those days to have two or more names; so Peter was sometimes called Simon and sometimes Cephas.

# REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

OR, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," etc., "unto his servant John," as is told us in the first verse of the first chapter. It was written by John, and divinely given to him to show the prophetic history of Christ's church in the world to the end. Many things in this book seem dark and hard to understand, because they tell of things that have not yet happened; but if we will read and study devoutly, we will gather as much of instruction from them as the old Jews did from their prophetic writings—enough to cause us to praise God, and cling closer to our glorified Saviour in love and worship. The descriptions given in this book of our Heavenly Father and his kingdom, of our Messiah King and his glory, of the eternal joys and grandeur belonging to his followers, as well as of the confusion and terrible ruin of the wicked, are highly interesting, and will call forth healthful thought and inquiry, even in the minds of careless readers; whereas the devoted, humble, and prayerful will be improved by a continual insight into new and fresh truths of the most comforting nature.

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OMITIAN, a Roman tyrant, banished the Apostle John, for being a Christian, to a solitary and rocky island called Patmos, about thirty miles from the western coast of Asia Minor. The good man is never alone, for God is with him everywhere. Here God favored John with wonderful visions of what should hereafter happen to the Church and the world.

The first three chapters of this book contain a sort of preface, addressed to the seven Churches in Asia Minor—namely, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The remaining chapters are accounts of his vision.

We shall first notice the seven Churches in Asia. These were not the only Churches in Asia Minor; for there were Churches in Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, etc., which were also in Asia Minor; but the Apostle knew and wrote to these seven Churches in particular. The first was *Ephesus*, of which we have made mention on several occasions. The second is still known as *Smyrna*, the largest and richest city of Asia Minor. It contains about one hundred and ninety thousand inhabitants, the largest number of which are *Turks*; the rest are Greeks, Jews (of whom there are eleven thousand),



Armenians, Roman Catholics, and Protestants. It is a beautiful city, but frequently ravaged by the plague, and has suffered by repeated earthquakes.

The third Church named is that of *Pergamos*. This city is now called Bergamo. It must in John's time have been a city of great importance, for it then had a manuscript library of 200,000 volumes, which Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, sent to Alexandria. It has now 14,000 inhabitants of different nations, but the houses are of wood, and look small and mean.

The fourth Church named is *Thyatira*. This place is situated in the midst of an extensive plain, which is nearly surrounded by mountains. Its houses are low, and chiefly of mud or earth. It now looks poor and mean. It was anciently, and still is, famous for dyeing, especially in scarlet.

The fifth Church mentioned is *Sardis*. This famed city was once the capital of King Croesus, the richest monarch that ever lived. He was defeated by Cyrus in the plain before the city, when it passed to the Persians. After the Persians were defeated by Alexander the Great it surrendered to him, and then in time to the Romans. It was destroyed by a terrible earthquake in the reign of Tiberius, the Roman Emperor, who rebuilt it. Afterward the different nations of Goths, Saracens, and Turks, one after another, ruined it in their wars, and it is nothing but desolation. A mere sprinkle of ruins of its former greatness remains. No Christians dwell on the spot: two Greeks only were lately living there to work a mill, and a few wretched Turkish huts were scattered among the ruins.

The sixth Church addressed was in *Philadelphia*. The Turks call this place Allah Shehr, or "city of God." There are now about three thousand houses on the spot, covering a space of ground running up the slope of three or four hills. The streets are filthy and the houses mean.

The seventh Church was that of *Laodicea*. There were two places so called in Asia Minor. This place is more desolate than any of the others, having been completely ruined by earthquakes. Its ruins cover three or four small hills, and are of very great extent, consisting of an aqueduct, theater, amphitheater, and other public buildings.

Some remarkable fulfilments of what God said by the apostle John must also be noticed.

The Ephesians had gone back in their religion, which is what is meant by leaving their first love. God threatened them by his prophet, and he told them that he would remove their "candlestick out of its place" if they did not repent. By this he meant that he would take the light of the Gospel away from them; and he did so. Ephesus is now a forlorn spot—it is no more. Its ruins are of vast extent.

Smyrna was mentioned in terms of approval, and no judgment was denounced against it. So, though they have but little Gospel light, yet the candlestick has not been wholly removed out of its place, and the city itself is still large and flourishing. Of this Church the venerable Polycarp was one of the pastors. In the year one hundred and sixty-two, about seventy years after this Book of the Bible was written, a persecution broke out against the Christians at Smyrna; and the Roman Emperors, who had then dominion of those parts, treated them with shocking cruelty because they would not serve their idols. The gray-headed Polycarp was marked for destruction. His friends concealed

him in a village, but they were put to the torture to make them tell where he could be found. The old man could not bear that they should all suffer for him, and delivered himself up, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." When he was brought before the proconsul, one of the governors of Smyrna wished him not to be injured, and, when he was examined, made signs that he should deny he was Polycarp, but Polycarp would not tell a falsehood. He then urged him to deny Christ, and promised him safety. "No," said the brave old man,



ASHTAROTH, THE PHILISTINE GODDESS.

“fourscore and six years have I served Christ; neither hath he ever wronged me at any time; how then can I deny my Saviour and King?” He was threatened with being thrown to the wild beasts, being burned and tormented, but he stood unmoved, saying, “You threaten me with fire, which shall last but an hour, and is quickly quenched; but you are ignorant of the everlasting fire of the day of judgment, and of those endless torments which are reserved for the wicked! But why do you delay? appoint me what death you please.” The proconsul was astonished. He then commanded the crier to proclaim three times that Polycarp owned himself a Christian, and he was sentenced to the flames. In the midst of the flames he thus prayed to his Father in heaven: “O God! the Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and through whom we have received the knowledge of thee! O God, the Creator of all things, upon thee I call, thee I confess to be the true God; thee I glorify! O Lord, receive me, and make me a partaker of the resurrection of thy saints, through the merits of our Great High Priest, thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever, Amen.” Here was courage more than mortal; God helping his servant to put on the martyr’s crown: and here was fulfilled what God said to Smyrna, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

The rest of this book is very difficult to explain, and can only in part be understood by those who are of riper years and who well study and pray over it. This book, like the Prophecies, is written in dark terms on purpose, because otherwise all the world would know them; and this book and the Prophecies are only designed to be a guide to those who wish to know the mind of God and to mark his providence in his dealings with his Church.

We can not, therefore, attempt to do more than to tell you that most of the language here used is the language of signs; that is, certain things are used to signify other things. John in his inspired visions saw all that he states; but then what he saw only represented realities in other forms.

In the eighth chapter the seven seals which were opened and the



seven trumpets which were to be blown are descriptions of seven periods of Christ's Church on earth and of the divisions of those periods. They tell of the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world; of the triumphs of Paganism and rise and fall of Popery and other great errors; of the final triumph of the Gospel, the happy state of the Church of Christ, the Day of Judgment, and the eternal blessedness of the saints.

May we, dear young readers, be found among the happy number, adoring Jesus, "the Lamb of God," who died for sinners, and singing forever, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" And may we, more than this, so try to do and finish our life's work that we shall reap the reward set before us in one of the most beautiful of the Old Testament prophecies: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

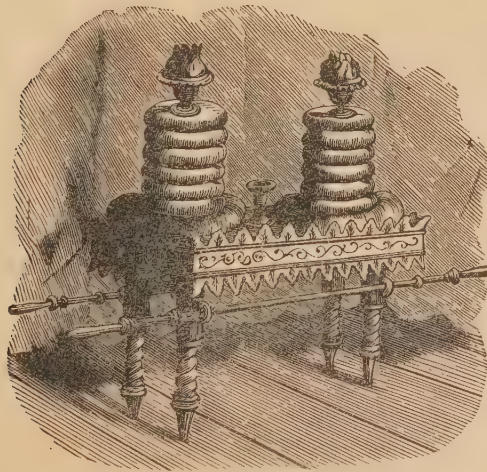


TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.

## ASIA MINOR.

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### The Scene of the Labors of the Apostles Paul, Peter, and John.

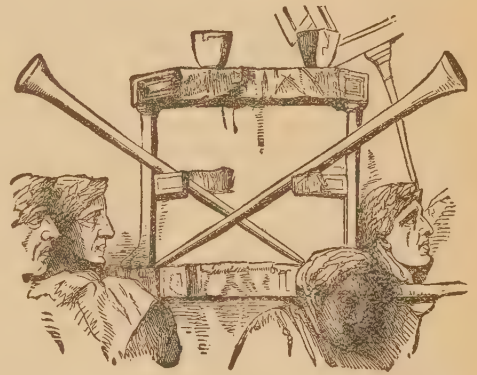


IN the fulfilment of our purpose of furnishing all necessary assistance to our readers for understanding and being profited by the word of God, we have thought it best to give such a description of the regions in which the Gospel was preached by the apostles and especially by Paul, John, and Peter, as should enable those who may read the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles to know definitely where, and under what difficulties, they performed their labors.

The missionary labors of Paul commenced at Antioch (which was his Christian home in a higher sense than Jerusalem), and extending at first to his native city, Tarsus, and his native province, Cilicia, led, in his successive missionary journeys, to his traversing five of the seven provinces which then comprised the peninsula now known as Asia Minor, and his subsequent visits to Macedonia, Attica, Achaia, and eventually Illyricum, and his compulsory residence in Rome. That he extended his labors in later life to Spain, and perhaps to other portions of western Europe, is possible but not certain; but we can only, in this place, concern ourselves with his work in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. The Apostle John, after many years of active labor in Jerusalem and Judea, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem, continued his work in Ephesus and its vicinity, and after the martyrdom of Paul and Timothy continued their work in the Roman province of Asia, the western province of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. The seven churches of Asia were all in this province. He was banished by Domitian to the isle of Patmos in the Ægean Sea, at no great

distance from Ephesus, but returned to that city after the death of the tyrant. The Apostle Peter, aside from occasional visits to Antioch, spent the earlier years of his ministry in Palestine, but finally crossed the Tigris into Mesopotamia, and at Edessa, Nisibis, and Babylon preached, founded schools, and wrote his epistles, visiting also Ephesus and Corinth, and ending his ministry by imprisonment and martyrdom at Rome.

It will be seen, then, that the regions which we have to describe in connection with the apostolic labors, as recorded in the New Testament, are Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, and Syria and Mesopotamia. Let us first understand where Asia Minor is. If you will look at any good map of Asia, or, what will be better, at any of the recent maps of the Turkish empire, you will notice that the Mediterranean Sea extends almost due eastward to the Syrian coast, and that the coast line runs nearly from north to south, as the eastern boundary of the great sea. Now look farther north on the same map, and about 350 miles to the north you will find the Black Sea, which in old times was called the Euxine Sea. Running your finger westward, along the south shore of



ROMANS CARRYING THE TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.

the Black Sea, you come to the Bosphorus, or strait leading into the Sea of Marmora, in which Constantinople is situated. Passing down this strait, into and through the whole length of the Sea of Marmora, which in Bible times was called the Propontis, you come to another strait now called the Dardanelles, but in former times the Hellespont, which leads into a sea full of islands, called the Ægean Sea or Archipelago, which is really a part of the Mediterranean. If you have followed my directions carefully, you will see that you have passed around three sides of a peninsula or tract of land bounded by water on the north, the west, and the south sides. This great peninsula, nearly 700 miles long from east to west, and about 400



miles wide, is ASIA MINOR. It is separated from Syria and Armenia on the east by the mountains of the lofty Taurus range. Its history for the past two thousand years has been full of interest; some of the most renowned cities of the world, such as ancient Troy, Ephesus, Tarsus, and Smyrna, were within its boundaries; many of the largest and most influential of the early Christian churches were founded here by the apostles and their successors; for five or six hundred years after the Christian era, the churches of Asia Minor exerted a powerful influence over all Christian Europe. At a later period the country fell into the hands of the Turkomans, and finally was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, who have held it to the present time, and have reduced much of it to the condition of a desert. It is still, however, the most populous and wealthy part of their empire.

But we have only to describe the country as it was in the time of the apostles. If you will look again at the map (our map of Asia Minor in this book), you will see in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea that there is a gulf projecting into the land; this is called the Gulf of Issus, and that part of the Mediterranean below it, the Sea of Cilicia. From the south a river flows down from the Syrian Mountains, and discharges its waters into this Cilician Sea; it is the river Orontes, and a few miles above its mouth you will find the city of Antioch. That city did not belong to Asia Minor, but was one of the capitals of Syria. It was a very rich, beautiful, and populous city. Here the disciples of Christ were first called Christians, and the Christian church of Antioch, soon after Paul's time, had 100,000 members and 3000 pastors and teachers. At this point were started the first Christian missions to the heathen. This was not far from A. D. 45. Previous to this time, Paul (or, as he was then called, Saul) had spent considerable time in his native city of Tarsus in Cilicia, preaching the Gospel, and probably establishing churches in that city and its vicinity, among the refined and intelligent people who had made it noted for its learning. But the first missionaries sent out from Antioch were Saul, or Paul, Barnabas, a converted Levite from Cyprus, and his nephew John Mark (the evangelist), a native of Jerusalem. Passing down the Orontes to Seleucia, the magnificent port

of Antioch, they sailed from thence to Salamis, on the island of Cyprus, and commenced their labors among the kinsmen and friends of Barnabas. After spending a few days there they passed along the southern coast of the island, which was then very populous, to Paphos, at its western end. Paphos was a large and very wicked city, wholly given up to the worship of the heathen goddess Venus; here Paul, by a miracle, caused a Jewish magician who was opposing the work of Christ to become blind, and the word preached was blessed to the conversion of many of the people of Paphos. We have recently had the most convincing proofs of the idolatry of the people of Cyprus, in the discoveries made by General di Cesnola of temples, idols, shrines, amulets, and votive offerings, at Paphos, which is now in ruins, and in other parts of the island.



EASTERN WOMEN WITH TIMBRELS, DANCING.

Without visiting the northern portion of the island, Paul and his companions sailed directly from Paphos to Perga, a city of Pamphylia, situated on the river Cestrus, on the main land, northwest from Paphos. Here they first entered Asia Minor, Cyprus being a separate Roman province, governed by a proconsul, or officer appointed by the Roman senate. Asia Minor, as we now call this peninsula, consisted at the time it was visited by Paul and his companions of seven Roman provinces, which, beginning at the west, were named Asia, Bithynia, Galatia, Pamphylia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Pontus. These provinces, some of them under other names, had been independent kingdoms before the time of Alexander the Great, and some of them had continued to be tributary kingdoms, first to Alexander and his successors, and afterward to Rome, until near this time. We find the old names remaining, though without definite boundaries, in the western provinces, at the time of Paul's journeys through them. Thus, Antioch in Pisidia is spoken of (in distinction from the Syrian

Antioch), Pisidia being the old name for the northern part of the province of Pamphylia, as Lycia (whose chief cities, Myra and Patara, were visited by Paul at a later period) was, of the southern part of that province. Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe are said to be cities of Lycaonia, that being the former name of the southwestern part of the province of Galatia. Phrygia was the old name of the eastern half of the province of Asia, and the Phrygians, like the Galatians, were a tribe or nation of different origin from the people who surrounded them.\* Mysia was the former name of a tract in the north of the province of Asia, and extended to the shores of the Hellespont and the Propontis, the present Dardanelles, and Sea of Marmora. Of these seven provinces, Paul, in his several missionary journeys, traversed five. There is no evidence that he ever entered Pontus or Bithynia, though he attempted to go into both. These two provinces, forming the entire northern districts of Asia Minor, have for their northern boundary the entire southern shore of the Euxine or Black Sea, and the now important cities of Trebizond, Tocat, Batoum, and Erzeroum are within their limits.

Of the southern and western provinces, Cilicia was his native province and often the scene of his labors; Cappadocia, north of Cilicia, was visited and crossed in his second and third journeys; Galatia was traversed and its principal cities visited in his first, second, and third journeys; and to the churches in Galatia his Epistle to the Galatians was addressed;† Pamphylia was crossed in his first

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\*The Galatians were of the same stock as the Gauls, or inhabitants of France, and the resemblance between the two nations was very strong in form and figure, in language and in their excitability and emotional tendency, and their fickleness and levity. The Epistle to the Galatians gives many illustrations of these traits of character.

† Paul's first visit to the cities of southern Galatia, or Lycaonia, as the region is called in Acts xiv, 6, was connected with his early experiences of the hostility and malignity of the unconverted Jews, which grew in intensity with every subsequent year of his life. Driven by their persecutions out of Antioch in Pisidia, where he had established a large and growing church, he was followed by his persistent foes to Iconium, and after long and successful labors there, forced to fly from a mixed mob of Jews and Gentiles to Lystra, where a miracle of healing wrought by him caused the heathen inhabitants to attempt to pay divine honors to him; but Jewish malignity again prevailed, and he was stoned by the mob. Escaping with his life by a miracle he went on to Derbe, where he was not molested, and after planting a church there he went back to Lystra, Iconium,



journey, both in going and returning, and its two principal cities, Perga and Attalia, visited; in his third journey he spent some time at Patara, and crossed thence to the island of Rhodes; in his last journey recorded in the Acts, that from Jerusalem to Rome, he touched at Myra, in the southern part of the province, and was there transferred to another ship. The province of Asia was the scene of his longest and most arduous labors. In three of his missionary journeys he passed through portions of its territory; in his first journey visiting some of its eastern cities; in his second, traversing the northern part, or Mysia, stopping for some time at Adramyttium, Assos, and Alexandria Troas, from whence he first entered Europe; in his third journey he entered the province from Galatia, visiting Philadelphia and Sardis, making his headquarters for two or three years at Ephesus, and preaching and organizing churches at Trogylium and Miletus, and possibly also visiting Crete, whither he afterward sent Titus. Mitylene, in the island of Lesbos, was visited, possibly twice in these journeys, and very possibly Samos also. Laodicea and Colossæ, to the churches in both which cities he addressed epistles (the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians having been probably a circular letter written to the several churches in Asia; see Colossians iv, 13-16), had not been visited by Paul in either of these journeys, nor, apparently, had Hierapolis, a large city near Laodicea, noted for



EASTERN LOAVES OF BREAD.

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and the Pisidian Antioch, and confirmed the disciples in their faith. In his subsequent journeys (his second and third) he returned first to Derbe, Lystra (where he found among the converts his young but greatly beloved companion, Timothy), and Iconium, and thence proceeded through the mountain passes into the ancient Phrygia, now the eastern part of the province of Asia, and after planting some churches there turned northeastward to Pessinus and Ancyra, cities of Galatia, to the churches in which the Epistle to the Galatians may have been addressed. In his third journey he is supposed to have visited also Tavia, another Galatian city, almost on the border of Pontus. It is supposed that there were Christian churches in Pontus at this time, for among the 3000 converted at the day of Pentecost were Jews from Pontus. Acts ii, 9.

its mineral springs. Philemon, to whom a short epistle is also addressed, was a convert under Paul's preaching, perhaps at Ephesus, and seems to have been the founder of the church at Colossæ.

His second and third missionary journeys extended into Europe; in the second he went, by way of Samothracia and Neapolis, to Philippi, the chief city of eastern Macedonia, where he and Silas were imprisoned in violation of the Roman law, and the next day, after a miracle and the conversion of the jailer and his family, were released with honor by the terrified magistrates. The epistle of Paul to the Philippian church was one of the results of his labors here. From thence they proceeded to Amphipolis and Apollonia, and without much delay went forward to Thessalonica (the Salonika of the present

day), where their labors were abundantly blessed. The church at Thessalonica became one of the largest and most efficient of those planted by the apostle in Europe. To it were addressed two of his epistles. Driven from this city by the persecution of the Jews, Paul and Silas went on to Berea, where another church was planted. These Macedonian churches were revisited several times by the apostle, and



EASTERN BAKER SELLING THIN CAKES.

there is reason to believe that after his acquittal at Rome he went to Macedonia, and from thence into Illyricum (the present Dalmatia and Montenegro).

From Berea Paul went alone by ship to Cenchrea, where he planted a church, and thence to Athens; and in that chief city of the Greek learning and philosophy preached Christ before its most brilliant scholars. His success here, however, was not so great as in Corinth, which he next visited, and where he remained nearly two years, and founded a church, which was for several centuries the largest and most influential in Greece. To this church his two longest epistles are addressed. His labors at this period were not confined to Corinth. Other cities of Achaia had the benefit of his zealous efforts. More

than once he visited Ephesus, and continued his watch-care over the churches of Asia. In his last return to Jerusalem he was unable to stop at Ephesus, but met the elders of the Ephesian church at Miletus, and gave them his parting blessing. If our readers have followed, on our excellent map of Asia Minor, these journeys of the Apostle Paul, they can not fail to have formed a very clear idea of the regions traversed by this early missionary.

Let us now briefly refer to the labors of the Apostle John in the province of Asia, at a considerably later date. As the chief pastor or bishop at Ephesus, the apostle's age and infirmity of body seem to have restricted him to a much narrower sphere of action than that of the Apostle Paul. Still the province of Asia was at this time very populous, and the great church at Ephesus, and the large and flourishing ones at Trogyllium, Miletus, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossæ, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Sardis, Thyatira, Pergamos, and Mitylene, all of them within a distance of about 100 miles, might well require all his waning strength. To seven of these churches he addressed those letters dictated by our Lord and recorded in the Revelation. Those churches, so flourishing and prosperous at that time, were a few centuries later extinct, and the cities themselves are nearly all now in ruins.

The journeyings of Peter outside of Palestine were perhaps less extensive than those of Paul. He was often at Antioch, was probably for a time in Corinth, from which he departed in consequence of the attempt of Jewish partisans to make out that there was a conflict between his teachings and those of Paul. There is a possibility, but very little probability, that he visited Rome at this time; his later years were spent in Mesopotamia, probably in Edessa and Nisibis, where he is said to have founded schools of Christian disciples, and in Babylon, from whence his epistles were written. In the year of his death he was taken to Rome, where, after being at liberty for a short time, he was sentenced to death, and was crucified, tradition says, with his head downward. His intercourse with Paul, in the later years of his ministry, was frequent and cordial. There is no reason to suppose, indeed, that it was ever otherwise, except on the occasion at Antioch,



when Paul, though much younger, "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Galatians ii, 11-19.

Of the journeyings and missionary labors of the other apostles we have no certain knowledge. Two of them, James, the son of Zebedee, and James, the brother of our Lord, died in Jerusalem, one slain by Herod Agrippa I, the other by the Jews. Jude, the brother of James, from certain passages in his epistle, is supposed to have been with or near Peter in Mesopotamia. Of the rest we have only vague and conflicting traditions.

# CHRONOLOGY OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

PLACE WHERE WRITTEN AND AUTHORS.

## HISTORICAL BOOKS.

| DATE. | TITLE.                           | AUTHOR.             | WHERE WRITTEN.   |
|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| A. D. |                                  |                     |                  |
| 38-61 | Gospel of St. Matthew, . . . . . | St. Matthew, . . .  | Jerusalem.       |
| 61    | Gospel of St. Mark, . . . . .    | St. Mark. . . . .   | Alexandria.      |
| 63-64 | Gospel of St. Luke, . . . . .    | St. Luke, . . . . . | Rome.            |
| 64    | Acts of the Apostles, . . . . .  | St. Luke, . . . . . | Rome (probably). |
| 97    | Gospel of St. John, . . . . .    | St. John, . . . . . | Ephesus.         |

## THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

| DATE.                     | TITLE.                                    | AUTHOR.             | WHERE WRITTEN.      |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| A. D.                     |                                           |                     |                     |
| 52                        | First Epistle to the Thessalonians, . . . | St. Paul, . . . . . | Corinth.            |
| 52                        | Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, . .  | St. Paul, . . . . . | Corinth.            |
| 56-57                     | Epistle to the Galatians, . . . . .       | St. Paul, . . . . . | Ephesus.            |
| 57                        | First Epistle to the Corinthians, . . .   | St. Paul, . . . . . | Ephesus.            |
| 58                        | Second Epistle to the Corinthians, . . .  | St. Paul, . . . . . | Philippi.           |
| 58                        | Epistle to the Romans, . . . . .          | St. Paul, . . . . . | Corinth.            |
| 61                        | Epistle to the Ephesians, . . . . .       | St. Paul, . . . . . | Rome.               |
| 62                        | Epistle to the Philippians, . . . . .     | St. Paul, . . . . . | Rome.               |
| 62                        | Epistle to the Colossians, . . . . .      | St. Paul, . . . . . | Rome.               |
| 63                        | Epistle to Philemon, . . . . .            | St. Paul, . . . . . | Rome.               |
| 63                        | Epistle to the Hebrews, . . . . .         | St. Paul, . . . . . | Rome.               |
| 64                        | First Epistle to Timothy, . . . . .       | St. Paul, . . . . . | Laodicea.           |
| 64                        | Epistle to Titus, . . . . .               | St. Paul, . . . . . | Ephesus (probably). |
| 65                        | Second Epistle to Timothy, . . . . .      | St. Paul, . . . . . | Rome (probably).    |
| 95-96<br>Published in 97. | REVELATION, . . . . .                     | St. John, . . . . . | Patmos.             |

## THE GENERAL EPISTLES.

| DATE. | TITLE.                                 | AUTHOR.              | WHERE WRITTEN. |
|-------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| A. D. |                                        |                      |                |
| 61    | Epistle of St. James, . . . . .        | St. James, . . . . . | Jerusalem.     |
| 63    | First Epistle of St. Peter, . . . . .  | St. Peter, . . . . . | Babylon.       |
| 65    | Second Epistle of St. Peter, . . . . . | St. Peter, . . . . . | Babylon.       |
| 65    | Epistle of St. Jude, . . . . .         | St. Jude, . . . . .  | Syria.         |
| 97-98 | First Epistle of St. John, . . . . .   | St. John, . . . . .  | Ephesus.       |
| 97-98 | Second Epistle of St. John, . . . . .  | St. John, . . . . .  | Ephesus.       |
| 97-98 | Third Epistle of St. John, . . . . .   | St. John, . . . . .  | Ephesus.       |

# PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

| PLACE.                   | SUBJECT.                               | TEXT.                                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Galilee, . . .           | Mote and Beam, . . . . .               | Matt. vii, 3-5 ; Luke vi, 39-42.                       |
| Galilee, . . .           | Foundation of Rock and Sand, . . .     | Matt. vii, 24-27 ; Luke vi, 48-49.                     |
| via, . . . . .           | The Two Debtors, . . . . .             | Luke vii, 41-50.                                       |
| Galilee, . . .           | The Barren Fig Tree, . . . . .         | Luke xiii, 6-9.                                        |
| Galilee, . . .           | The Sower, . . . . .                   | Matt. xiii ; Mark iv ; Luke viii.                      |
| Galilee, . . .           | Wheat and Tares, . . . . .             | Matt. xiii, 24-30.                                     |
| Galilee, . . .           | Seed Cast in the Ground, . . . . .     | Mark iv, 26-29.                                        |
| Galilee, . . .           | The Mustard-seed, . . . . .            | Matt. xiii, 31-32 ; Mark iv, 30-32 ;<br>Luke xiii, 19. |
| Galilee, . . .           | The Leaven, . . . . .                  | Matt. xiii, 33 ; Luke xiii, 20-21.                     |
| Galilee, . . .           | The Buried Treasure, . . . . .         | Matt. xiii, 44.                                        |
| Galilee, . . .           | Pearl of Great Price, . . . . .        | Matt. xiii, 45-46.                                     |
| Galilee, . . .           | Casting of the Net, . . . . .          | Matt. xiii, 47-50.                                     |
| Capernaum }<br>and via } | Parables of the Lost Sheep, . . . . .  | Matt. xviii, 12-14 ; and Luke xv, 3-7.                 |
| Capernaum, . .           | The Merciless Debtor, . . . . .        | Matt. xviii, 23-35.                                    |
| Jerusalem, . .           | Good Samaritan, . . . . .              | Luke x, 30-37.                                         |
| via, . . . . .           | Chief Seats at the Wedding, . . . . .  | Luke xiv, 7-12.                                        |
| via, . . . . .           | The Midnight Friend, . . . . .         | Luke xi, 5-13.                                         |
| Capernaum, . .           | Return of Unclean Spirit, . . . . .    | Luke xi, 24-26.                                        |
| via, . . . . .           | The Rich Fool, . . . . .               | Luke xii, 16-21.                                       |
| Jerusalem, . .           | The Shepherd and Sheep, . . . . .      | John x, 1-18.                                          |
| Jerusalem, via,          | The Faithful Servants, . . . . .       | Luke xii, 37-39.                                       |
| via, . . . . .           | The Faithful Steward, . . . . .        | Luke xii, 42-48.                                       |
| via, . . . . .           | The Closed Door, . . . . .             | Luke xiii, 24-27.                                      |
| via, . . . . .           | The Great Supper, . . . . .            | Luke xiv, 16-25.                                       |
| via, . . . . .           | Building a Tower, . . . . .            | Luke xiv, 28-30.                                       |
| via, . . . . .           | A King Going to War, . . . . .         | Luke xiv, 31-33.                                       |
| via, . . . . .           | The Lost Piece of Money, . . . . .     | Luke xv, 8-9.                                          |
| via, . . . . .           | The Prodigal Son, . . . . .            | Luke xv, 11-32.                                        |
| via, . . . . .           | The Unjust Steward, . . . . .          | Luke xvi, 1-8.                                         |
| via, . . . . .           | Rich Man and Lazarus, . . . . .        | Luke xvi, 19-31.                                       |
| via, . . . . .           | The Unjust Judge, . . . . .            | Luke xviii, 1-8.                                       |
| via, . . . . .           | Pharisee and Publican, . . . . .       | Luke xviii, 9-14.                                      |
| via, . . . . .           | Laborers in the Vineyard, . . . . .    | Matt. xx, 1-16.                                        |
| via, . . . . .           | Ten Servants and Ten Pounds, . . . . . | Luke xix, 12-27.                                       |
| Jerusalem, . .           | The Two Sons, . . . . .                | Matt. xxi, 28-32.                                      |
| Jerusalem, . .           | The Leased Vineyard, . . . . .         | Matt. xxi, 33-46.                                      |
| Jerusalem, . .           | The Marriage Feast, . . . . .          | Matt. xxii, 1-14.                                      |
| Jerusalem, . .           | The Fig Tree, . . . . .                | Matt. xxiv, 32.                                        |
| Jerusalem, . .           | Faithful and False Servant, . . . . .  | Matt. xxiv, 45-51.                                     |
| Jerusalem, . .           | Wise and Foolish Virgins, . . . . .    | Matt. xxv, 1-13.                                       |
| Jerusalem, . .           | The Talents, . . . . .                 | Matt. xxv, 14-30.                                      |
| Jerusalem, . .           | Sheep and Goats, . . . . .             | Matt. xxv, 31-46.                                      |











